PLANT FACT SHEET

Ceiba pentandra (L.) Gaertn.

GENUS *Ceiba* **FAMILY** Malvaceae

COMMON NAMES Kapok, White silk cotton tree

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds, Leaves, Calyces, Flowers, Vegetable, Fruit, Oil

The young pods can be eaten cooked.
The young leaves can be eaten cooked.
The seeds can be eaten either roasted fresh, or after sprouting. They are also added to soups.
The young flowers can be eaten. They are blanched before eating.
The resin from the trunk is put in water and drunk.
CAUTION Older pods and leaves have medicinal uses. Large quantities of seeds can upset the digestion.

DESCRIPTION

A very large tree with a straight trunk and height of 30-40 m. Trees can be 60 m high and the trunk 8 m around. It has large prickly buttresses near the base. The branches come out horizontally and there is a ring of them around the trunk. The leaves are compound. The leaflets spread out like fingers on a hand, with 5-8 leaflets. They are 5-18 cm long by 2-4.5 cm wide. The leaf stalk is 7-20 cm long. The leaves all fall off the tree (deciduous). Flowers are yellowish white, in clusters near the ends of branches. These hang downwards. A long seed capsule hangs from branches. It is 10-30 cm long. It splits into 5 valves. The seeds are embedded in white or grey kapok.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. Mostly in the lowlands and up to about 1000 m. It suits rainforest areas with a heavy rainfall. It suits humid locations. The soil needs to be well drained. It can grow in seasonally flooded forests. The tree is easily damaged by strong winds. It needs a temperature of 25°-30°C and not below 15°C. It is light demanding. It suits hardiness zones 11-12. In XTBG Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seed. Seeds germinate quickly and seedlings can be transplanted. It can be easily grown from large cuttings.
Plants can be budded.

Harvesting and Seed Production

It is a fast growing tree. Pods are produced seasonally.

NOTES

There are 4-15 Ceiba species. (The fibres of the pods are used for pillows.) The seeds contain linoleic acid. Also put in the family Bombacaceae. In the subfamily Bombacoideae.

PICTURES



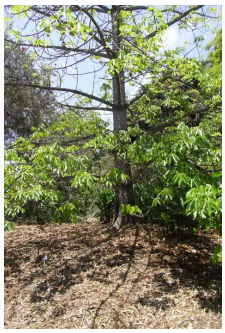
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