PLANT FACT SHEET

Prunus salicifolia Kunth

GENUS *Prunus* **FAMILY** Rosaceae

COMMON NAMES Capulin, Mexican bird cherry

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Seeds

The fruit are eaten raw or used in preserves. They are stewed and used for jams and preserves.

DESCRIPTION

An erect umbrella shaped tree which loses many leaves during the year. It has a short stout trunk. The bark is rough and grey. The leaves are produced one after another along the branch. They are 10-11 cm long and have a sweet smell. The edges of the leaves have teeth. The leaves are deep green and shiny on top and dull underneath. New leaves can be red. The flowers are produced in clusters in the angles of leaves. The flowers are about 2 cm across with white petals and easy to see stamens. About 15-20 fruit can develop on a cluster. Some fall before ripening. The fruit are 1-2 cm across and with one large stone inside. The flesh of the fruit is pale green and firm. There are several named cultivated varieties.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. They suit a subtropical to warm temperate climate. It grows in the highlands in the tropics. In the mountains in Mexico is grows between 1200 and 3000 m altitude. It is frost tolerant and can stand temperatures down to -7°C. They do not have specific daylength requirements and do not require chilling prior to fruiting. The require full sunlight. Trees need wind protection when young. They do best on sandy soils with a pH 5.5 to 6.5. It suits hardiness zones 6-10.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown by seed or grafting. Although pruning is no necessary, trees can be pruned for size or shape.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Trees are fast growing. They can reach 3 m in 12-18 months. Fruit are produced 6-8 years after planting from seeds and 2-3 years after planting from grafts. There can be more than one crop of fruit per year. Fruit will store in cool conditions for 4-6 weeks.

NOTES

There are about 200 Prunus species.

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