PLANT FACT SHEET

Dillenia indica L.

GENUS *Dillenia* **FAMILY** Dilleniaceae

COMMON NAMES Elephant apple

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Flowers, Calyx, Leaves

The fruit can be used for jellies, curries and drinks. It is the fleshy sepals around the fruit that are eaten. They can be pickled. The ripe fruit can be eaten raw. More commonly they are used in curries, especially prawn curries. They can be cooked with lentils. They can be made into jam. They are used for chutney.
The sweetened fruit juice makes a cooling drink.
The fleshy calyx can be stored for 20 days.
The young leaves are eaten.

DESCRIPTION

An evergreen tree with a short trunk. It grows to 10-15-30 m high and spreads to 4-10 m across. The bark is rough. It has a dense round crown. The branches are straggling and droop at the end. The leaves are at the ends of branches. The leaves are deeply ribbed. They have teeth around the edge. The leaves are bright dark green. They are 15-25 cm long and 5-10 cm wide, but can be twice that size. The leaves have a bold pattern of sunken veins. The leaf stalk is 2-5 cm long. The flower buds are large and round and look like fruit. The flowers are large and white and 20 cm across. They are cup shaped. The flowers are produced in the upper leaf axils. The flower sepals thicken and cover the fruit to make a round green fruit up to 12 cm across. The seeds are kidney shaped with hairy edges. They are embedded in a glutinous pulp.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It suits the tropical lowlands. It prefers rich moist soils. It needs a protected partly shaded position. It is drought and frost tender. They need a temperature above 15°C to grow. It grows in moist evergreen forest. In Papua New Guinea it is an introduced species and grows in coastal areas below about 600 m altitude. In Yunnan in China it grows between 600-1100 m altitude. In XTBG Yunnan. In the Cairns Botanical Gardens. It suits hardiness zones 10-12.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are normally grown from seed. They can be grown from cuttings and by air layering.

Harvesting and Seed Production

In NE India fruit are available September to December.

NOTES

There are about 60 Dillenia species.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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French, B.R. & Maynard, A.R. Food Plants International Database. Food Plants International

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