PLANT FACT SHEET

Phyllanthus emblica L.

GENUS *Phyllanthus* **FAMILY** Phyllanthaceae

COMMON NAMES Emblic, Indian gooseberry, Myrobalan

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds, Fruit, Leaves, flower, Tea

The fruit are cooked and used in preserves. The fruit are acid and can be eaten fresh or used for flavouring. They are also used as a seasoning in cooked food.
They are pickled and made into jams, jellies, preserves, tarts and other foods.
The dried fruit chips are seasoned with caraway seeds, salt and yoghurt and eaten.
Unripe seeds and leaves are edible.

DESCRIPTION

A small deciduous tree. It grows 2-20 m tall. The trunk is bent and has many branches. The branches are spreading. The bark is greyish-brown and peels off in flakes. The leaves are pale green and feathery. New leaves are pinkish. The leaves have short stalks. The leaves are 1-1.5 cm long by 0.2-0.3 cm wide. The leaves are arranged on slender branches to appear like feathery compound leaves. They are like tamarind leaves. Male and female flowers occur on different trees. The flowers are small and yellow. They are densely clustered on the branches. The fruit are small and yellow to green. They are 2 cm across and edible. They have 6-8 faint lines along them. They are fleshy and edible. They are sour. Some improved kinds have fruit 8-9 cm across. The seeds are 3 sided.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It suits the hot humid tropical lowlands. It is native to tropical Asia. It grows in arid bushy savannah. It grows from 10-20 m to 1400-1500 m altitude. It often grows on poor shallow soils. It is light demanding and drought tolerant. It can tolerate forest fires. They are common in tropical deciduous forest in India. It suits the subtropics. It needs warm temperatures at time of flower bud formation. Dry times during fruiting cause fruit to drop. It can tolerate low and high temperatures once established. It can tolerate soils with a pH 6-10. Some varieties can tolerate salty soils. In XTBG Yunnan. In Sichuan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. They are best grown using ring budding or veneer grafting. Trees can be pruned to form 4-6 branches from one trunk. They can be grown from cuttings, grafting or by air layering. Seeds are slow to germinate. They can be pre-soaked for 24 hours before planting.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Early growth is fast. Some budded trees produce fruit after 3 years. Seedling trees take 7-8 years. Best yields are produced after 10-12 years and trees can keep bearing for 70-75 years. In India fruit are available October to December. A fruit weighs 30-50 g.

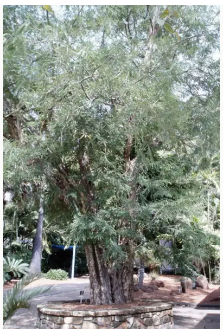
NOTES

There are about 750 Phyllanthus species. They are mostly in the tropics. The fruit are high in Vitamin C. It has anticancer properties.
It has been used to reduce arsenic damage.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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