PLANT FACT SHEET

Theobroma speciosum (Willd. ex Spreng.) K. Schum.

GENUS *Theobroma* **FAMILY** Malvaceae

COMMON NAMES Handsome chocolate tree

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Seeds

The pulp of the fruit is eaten raw. They can also be used for drinks.
Occasionally the seeds are used to make low grade chocolate.

DESCRIPTION

A small tree. It grows 8-14 m high. The crown is narrow and sparse. The trunk is upright. It is an irregular shape. It is 15-25 cm across. The bark is rough. The leaves are simple and alternate. The leaves are shiny on the upper surface and with rusty hairs underneath. Leaves are 20-40 cm long by 7-17 cm wide. There are 4 pairs of side veins. The flowers are mostly on the stem. They are in dense groups. The flowers are red and have a strong lemon scent. The fruit are the size of a baseball. It has a velvety feel. The fruit are yellow when mature. The pulp has a sweet taste. There are about 20 seeds.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows in the understorey in the tropics. It cannot tolerate cold or frost. It grows in the rainforest.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. The ripe fruit are harvested and the seeds removed. The seedscan only be stored for a few days. The fresh seeds with their pulp can be sown. They germinate in 15-25 days. Seedlings can be transplanted to the field in 6-7 months.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Plants grow slowly. They reach 1.5 m after 2 years.

NOTES

Also put in the family Byttneriaceae and the family Sterculiaceae.

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