PLANT FACT SHEET

# *Lepisanthes rubiginosa* (Roxburgh) Leenhouts

**GENUS** *Lepisanthes* **FAMILY** Sapindaceae

**COMMON NAMES** Rusty sapindus

## EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

**Edible parts:** Fruit, Leaves

The ripe fruit are eaten raw. It is the aril or layer around the seed which is eaten. The fruit are made into jams and syrups.
The young leaves are eaten as a vegetable.

## DESCRIPTION

A shrub 1-3 m tall. It can grow to 10 m tall. It can spread 1-2 m wide. Trunks can occasionally be 35 cm across. The young branches are slightly grooved. They are covered with brown hairs. The leaves are 10-30 cm long and divided. There are 4-18 leaflets. These are 3-24 cm long by 3-6 cm wide. They are oval or oblong and largest towards the tip. They are dark green and leathery. There are brown hairs on both surfaces. The flower panicle is 10-35 cm long and it has many branches. The flowers are 0.6 cm across. They are white. The fruit are in large clusters. The fruit is 1 cm long and covered with fine hairs. It turns yellow, orange, purple then black as it ripens. It has a thin sweet juicy pulp. The fruit is a capsule.

## HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows in secondary forest. On thin, poor soils it is only a shrub. In Indonesia it grows up to 1200 m altitude. It grows in monsoonal forest. It suits tropical and warm subtropical locations. It suits hardiness zones 10-12.

## PRODUCTION

### Cultivation

Plants are grown from fresh seed.

### Harvesting and Seed Production

In NE Thailand fruit are ripe April to August. In northeastern India plants flower and fruit April to June. Fruit matures in about 100 days.

## NOTES

There are 24-40 Lepisanthes species. They are mostly in the tropics.

## PICTURES



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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