PLANT FACT SHEET

Cornus mas L.

GENUS *Cornus* **FAMILY** Cornaceae

COMMON NAMES Cornelian cherry, Cornel

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Herb, Flowers, Seeds - coffee

The fruit are made into jellies and preserves. They are used in tarts. They can also be eaten raw.
The fruit are also used for wine. The juice is added to perry and cider.
The flowers are used to flavour spirits.
The seeds are ground and used as a coffee substitute.
The under-ripe fruit are pickled.

DESCRIPTION

A very small tree. It has many branches. It grows 4.5-6 m tall. The leaves are opposite and pointed. The leaves are dark glossy green. They are 5-10 cm long and oval. There are 4-5 pairs of veins. Leaves are hairy on both surfaces. The buds are yellow. The flowers occur in small yellow clusters. There are 4 boat shaped flower bracts. The flowers develop on the leafless branches on short side shoots. Trees produce male flowers at first then female flowers later in their growth. The fruit are bright red and occur singly. They are oblong and 2 seeded. They are 15 mm long. They are edible. There are several named cultivated varieties.

HABITAT

It is a temperate plant. It is cold hardy. It grows best on chalky soils. It cannot grow on acid soils but will grow on most other soils. It can grow in full sun or light shade. It suits hardiness zones 5-8. Hobart Botanical Gardens. Arboretum Tasmania.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from washed seeds. Seeds can take 18 months to germinate. Seeds stored for 3-4 months at about 4°C then soaked for a few hours in warm water germinate more easily. Plants can be grown from cuttings. Cuttings need to be grown for 2-3 years before planting out. Suckers can be used.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Trees can take 12 years to start producing fruit.

NOTES

There are about 45 Cornus species.

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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