



PLANT FACT SHEET

Eugenia uniflora L.

GENUS *Eugenia* FAMILY Myrtaceae

COMMON NAMES Surinam cherry, Pitanga

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Leaves - tea

The ripe fruit is eaten fresh. It can be cooked or used for jams and other products. The leaves are used as a substitute for tea.

DESCRIPTION

A small tree up to 5-7.5 m high. It is often a much smaller shrub. Branches often develop close to the ground. The branches are thin and wiry. It has attractive oval and pointed leaves. They are dark green and shiny. The leaves are 2.5-6 cm long by 1.5-3 cm wide. New leaves are dark purple or red. The flowers are small and white and the fruit is lobed and red. There is a single large seed inside. The fruit is about 3 cm across. The tree is used as a hedge plant. The flesh of the fruit is edible. There are several named cultivated varieties.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It grows in the lowlands. It is native to South America. It grows in the tropical lowlands from sea level up to about 800 m or higher in Papua New Guinea. In south India it grows to 1700 m altitude. In Argentina it grows from sea level to 1,500 m above sea level. It is suited to a warm moist climate. Adequate moisture is needed during fruit development. It can be grown in the subtropics. It can stand some frost. Mature trees can withstand frosts down to -3°C. It does best with a pH of 5-7. It grows in Miombo woodland in Africa. It suits hardiness zones 10-12. In XTBG Yunnan. In Sichuan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Trees are mostly grown from seeds but can be grown from cuttings. Seeds should be fresh. Seeds grow in 3-5 weeks. Seed which are extracted from the fruit then washed and dried can be stored for a month. Seed can be sun dried for 7 days then stored in cool open containers for a few months. Seed can be planted 1-2 cm deep in nursery beds then transplanted when 20-30 cm tall. Trees can be trimmed and pruned to form hedges. Ground layering and suckers could probably be used to produce new plants. Tips from trees with better fruit types can be grafted onto seedling root stocks. It can be trained as a hedge.

Harvesting and Seed Production

It is a slow growing plant. Several crops of fruit are produced each year. Flowers or fruit can be on the tree throughout the year in tropical locations. Trees start to produce fruit after about 3-4 years. Fruit are mature 5-6 weeks after flowering.

NOTES

There are about 550 *Eugenia* species. They are mostly in tropical and subtropical South America. It has antioxidant activities.

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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