PLANT FACT SHEET

Casimiroa edulis La Llave & Lexarza

GENUS *Casimiroa* **FAMILY** Rutaceae

COMMON NAMES Casimiroa, White sapote

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Seeds, Nuts

The fruit is mainly eaten raw after removing the skin. They can be used in drinks. They are not suitable for cooking. They can be dried, frozen, served with cream and sugar or used in ice cream, milk shakes and salads. The seed can be eaten when fully dry and roasted.
CAUTION The seeds are reported to be poisonous raw.

DESCRIPTION

The tree starts out growing erect then develops a spreading habit with drooping branches. It grows between 5 to 18 m high. It is evergreen. It has large compound leaves shaped like the fingers on a hand. The 3-7 leaflets are long and smooth. They can be 12-15 cm long. They are on a long leaf stalk. New growth is normally reddish. The flowers are small (10 mm across) greenish-yellow and in panicles of 20-80 flowers. Many varieties only have functioning female flower parts so need pollinator trees. The fruit change from green to yellow with maturity. The fruit are round and 7-12 cm across. The flesh is white in green skinned kinds and yellow in yellow skinned kinds. They contain 1 to 5 seeds.

HABITAT

It is a subtropical tree. It is not suited to the coastal tropics nor the desert regions. It grows in the tropical highlands above 600 m. They tolerate a range of soil types. They need well drained soil. They show some frost, drought and salt tolerance. But trees fruit better if well watered. Sites protected from wind are best. They prefer a pH between 5.5 and 7.5. In Central America trees grow up to 2,500 m altitude. Deep, acid, sandy soils rich in compost are best. In Hobart Botanical gardens. It suits hardiness zones 10-11.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants do not grow true to type from seed. They can be grafted or budded. Air layering can be used. Seed need to be cleaned and planted fresh. A spacing between 4 and 8 m is recommended. Plants establish easily and grow quickly. Picking out the terminal bud can increase branching. Frequent light pruning is suggested to increase the number of fruiting arms but pruning should not be too heavy.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Trees from seeds take 10 years to bear. Grafted or budded trees bear after 3-4 years. It takes 6-9 months from flowering to mature fruit. Fruit are picked when colour changes occur and ripened off the tree. They can be stored at 5°C for 3-6 weeks. Adding potash prior to fruiting and nitrogen prior to vegetative regrowth is suggested. Fruit yields are high. A large tree can produce a ton of fruit in one year. Fruit do not handle easily without damage.

NOTES

There are 5-6 Casimiroa species.

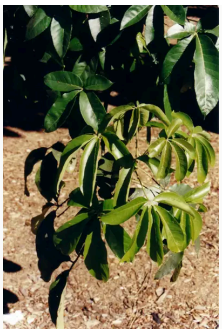
PICTURES



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