PLANT FACT SHEET

Thaumatococcus daniellii (Benn.) Benth. ex B. D. Jacks.

GENUS *Thaumatococcus* **FAMILY** Marantaceae

COMMON NAMES Miraculous fruit, Supersweet

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: seeds - aril, Fruit, Seeds, Leaves - flavouring

The fruit are used to sweeten food or drink. It can be used to sweeten bread, palm wine, and tea. They can be eaten raw.
The seed are chewed and are very sweet.
The leaves are employed as food wrappers. They also add flavour.

DESCRIPTION

A herb which forms rhizomes. It has a short stem bearing a single leaf. The leaves are 30-60 cm long and 40 cm wide and dark green. They are on leaf stalks up to 75 cm long. These grow from the rhizome. The flowers are in a raceme with branched flowers around a central stalk. This is 10 cm long. The fruit are triangular capsules. The fruit are red. They are produced on 15 cm long stalks which come from the base. The fruit are 3 cm across. They have 3 sections. The seed are 3 sided. They have a white aril or layer around them.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It needs warm, sheltered, frost free sites. It grows in lowland tropical rainforest. It suits humid locations.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It can be grown from seed or division of the rhizome. Plants are spaced 1 m apart.

Harvesting and Seed Production

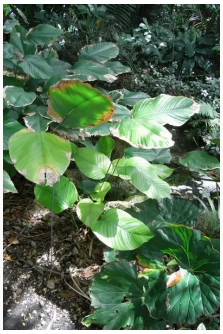
First flowering starts 3 months after planting. Good fruit develop in plants over 2 years old. Young fruit mature in 13 weeks. In Liberia the fruit are produced from November to April.

NOTES

It contains a sweetener called Thaumatin. Thaumaton is 2000-3000 times sweeter than sucrose.

PICTURES

Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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