PLANT FACT SHEET

Manilkara bidentata (A. DC.) A. Chev.

GENUS *Manilkara* **FAMILY** Sapotaceae

COMMON NAMES Common balata, Bulletwood

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Seeds, Flowers, Latex

The latex has been used for chewing gum.

DESCRIPTION

A large tree. It can grow 35 m high. The trunk is large and there are small buttresses. The bark has vertical cracks. The leaves are simple and alternate. The leaves are tightly bunched at the ends of the branches. The leaves are 6-30 cm long by 3-12 cm wide. The leaves are shiny green above and light brown underneath. The flowers are small and white or yellow. The fruit are round with a small tip. They turn orange when ripe. There are one or two seeds. The are dark brown with a light brown patch. They are a flattened oval shaped and 2 cm long by 1 cm wide.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It grows in wet lowland forest. It can be on sand or clay soil.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed.

Harvesting and Seed Production

In Guyana flowering is May to August and fruiting February to April. Trees only fruit well every 3 - 4 years.

NOTES

There are about 70 Manilkara species. 30 in America, 20 in Africa and 15 in Asia/Pacific.

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