PLANT FACT SHEET

Melastoma malabathricum L.

GENUS *Melastoma* **FAMILY** Melastomataceae

COMMON NAMES Pink Lasiandra, Indian Rhododendron

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Fruit, Flowers, Roots

The ripe fruit are eaten raw. They should not be eaten in excess amounts.
The young sour leaves are eaten cooked with food.

DESCRIPTION

An evergreen shrub. It grows about 2 m high. The branches are nearly four angled. They are densely covered with scales. The leaves have stalks. The leaves are 3.5-10 cm long by 1.4-3 cm wide. They are broadly sword shaped. They have hairs on the upper surface and a few underneath. The flowers are purple. The fruit is oval with a blunt end. The pulp of the fruit is red.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It suits the hot, wet tropical lowlands. In Nepal it grows between 200-1600 m altitude. In Yunnan in China it grows below 1800 m altitude. It grows in secondary forest. It needs regular moisture and humidity. It grows in wetlands. It needs fertile, well-drained soil. It needs an acid pH. It suits hardiness zones 10-12.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown by seeds or offshoots. It can also be grown by cuttings.

Harvesting and Seed Production

In NE India fruit are available November to January.

NOTES

There are about 90 Melastoma species. It can become a pest plant.

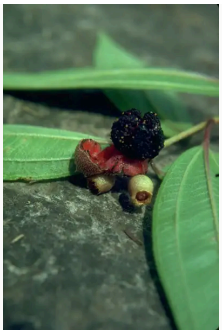
PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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