PLANT FACT SHEET

Trichilia emetica Vahl

GENUS *Trichilia* **FAMILY** Meliaceae

COMMON NAMES Banket mahogany, Cape mahogany, Natal mahogany

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: seeds - aril, Seeds, Fruit, Seeds - oil

CAUTION: The seeds are reported to be poisonous. The oil extracted from the seeds, without the coat, is used. Hot water is poured over the seeds and they are left to soak for a few hours then rubbed between the hands. A sweet milky liquid is extracted from the layer around the seeds. It is used as a drink or added to food.
The flesh of the fruit is eaten.
The fleshy layer or aril around the seeds is separated from the seeds, are soaked and cooked with sweet potato or squash.

DESCRIPTION

A large tree. It is evergreen. It grows 8-20 m high. The crown is round and widespreading. The leaves have 4-5 pairs of leaflets and one at the end. They are oblong and 12 cm long by 5.5 cm wide. They are dark green and glossy above and have short hairs underneath. The leaf stalk is 7-12 cm long. The flowers are creamy-green. The petals are 1.6 cm long. They occur in sort branched heads in the axils of leaves. These are about 5 cm long. The fruit is an almost round creamy-brown capsule. It is 2.5-3 cm across. They split into 2-3 valves. The seeds are black and covered with a red seed coat (aril).

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows at medium to low altitudes in forests along rivers and near the coast. In East Africa it grows from sea level to 1,835 m altitude. In West Africa it grows in the savannah. It grows in areas with a rainfall above 550 mm. It can tolerate drought. It cannot tolerate frost. It can grow in arid places.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants need to be grown from fresh seeds. Seeds germinate in 10-20 days. It can be grown by cuttings.

Harvesting and Seed Production

It is fast growing. In Tanzania fruit can be collected from April to July and November to December. Dried seeds can be stored for several months.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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