PLANT FACT SHEET

Matisia cordata Bonpl.

GENUS *Matisia* **FAMILY** Malvaceae

COMMON NAMES South American sapote

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit

The fruit are eaten raw or stewed to make drinks.
They can be used to extract starch.

DESCRIPTION

A medium sized tree. It grows to 20-30 m high. It can grow to 50 m. The trunk is 50-90 cm across. The branches are almost horizontal. The leaves are simple and alternate. It loses some of its leaves during the year. The leaves are heart shaped and a deep green colour. They have long leaf stalks. The leaves are crowded near the ends of twigs and branches. They are 20-25 cm long. The flowers are creamy-yellow. They have unusual, long stamen columns. The flowers are on the branches and trunk. The fruit is large and elliptical. It is flattened and brown, with a nipple at the end. The fruit is round and 7-15 cm long by 5-15 cm wide. The skin is an olive green colour and leathery. The pulp is orange-yellow and sweet. It is fibrous. The seeds are 2-4 cm long. There are 2-5 seeds inside.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows in the lowlands. It is native to NW South America. It grows in humid tropical and subtropical regions. It suits areas with lots of rain. It can grow in soils which are occasionally flooded. It grows in regions with 1,500-4,000 mm rain per year. It grows in rainforest areas on fertile soils. It grows naturally in the upper Amazon regions of Peru, Brazil and Ecuador. In the Andes it grows between 500-1,500 m above sea level.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. The seeds are collected fro ripe fruit and the pulp removed by allowing them to partly decompose then washing under running water. Seed should be planted fresh. They are best in light shade. Seedlings emerge in 20-30 days.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Plants grow rapidly. Trees 5 years old can produce fruit. Between 700-1,000 fruit can be produced per tree. A fruit weighs between 300-400 g. Fruit mature in 270-300 days.

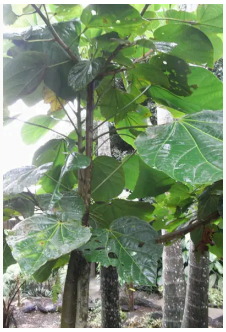
NOTES

Also put in the family Bombacaceae. In the subfamily Bombacoideae.
It has 2,400 micrograms of carotene per 100 g of pulp.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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