PLANT FACT SHEET

Cola nitida (Vent.) Schott et Endl.

GENUS *Cola* **FAMILY** Malvaceae

COMMON NAMES Ghanja Kola, Bitter Cola

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds, Fruit

The nut is used as a masticatory.
The nuts are also dried and sold. They are chewed as a caffeine rich stimulant.
The seeds are dried, ground and made into drinks.

DESCRIPTION

A tree. It grows up to 8-12 m high. The trunk does not have branches for a few metres. There are buttresses to 1 m high. The bark is grey with cracks along it. The small branches are smooth. The leaves are not confined to the tips of branches. The leaves are simple and 9-32 cm long by 3.5-13 cm wide. They are leathery and dark green. The leaf stalk is 1-10 cm long. It is swollen at the top. The flowers are in short, irregular, branches clusters. The flowers are joined for 1/3 of their length forming a cup. The female flowers are 5 cm across and the male flowers 2 cm. They are white or cream with red marks inside. The fruit are made up of 5 cells which curve back. They are green and shiny. The fruit are 14 cm long by 7.5 cm wide. There are about 10 seeds. These are covered with a white skin. The seeds have purple seed leaves. When the seed coat is removed the seed splits into two.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It grows in lowland rain-forest. It needs a temperature above 20-24°C for planting and tolerate a temperature down to 13-15°C. It suits hardiness zones 11-12.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seed or by cuttings. It can be grown by suckers.

NOTES

Also put in the family Sterculiaceae.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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French, B.R. & Maynard, A.R. Food Plants International Database. Food Plants International

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