



PLANT FACT SHEET

Eriobotrya japonica (Thunb.) Lindley

GENUS *Eriobotrya* FAMILY Rosaceae

COMMON NAMES Loquat

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Seeds - coffee

The ripe fruit is eaten fresh.

If the fruit is cooked, the seeds should be removed as they give a bitter taste.

The fruit are used for alcohol production. Caution: Alcohol is a cause of cancer.

Fruit are also used for jam, jellies and sauces. They can be stewed or used in pies.

The roasted seeds are used as a coffee substitute.

CAUTION The leaves are poisonous. The seeds are also poisonous.

DESCRIPTION

A small evergreen tree up to 6-10 m high. It has a round crown. Leaves are large and strongly ribbed. They are 12-30 cm long and 8-10 cm wide. They are dark green and glossy on the upper surface and woolly white underneath. They are leathery with slight teeth. The new growth is tinged with red. Flowers have a strong scent. Flowers are small and white and in clusters at the ends of branches. They have a scent. Fruit are in loose clusters of about 10. They are pear shaped. They are 3-5 cm long and yellow when ripe. There are 3-5 large brown seeds in each fruit.

HABITAT

It is native to China and Japan. They suit subtropical and warm temperate areas. It can grow in the highlands in the tropics. Trees grow best between 750 and 1750 m altitude in the tropics, and are best about 1000 m. It is not suited to the coastal tropics and can't stand heavy frosts on the flowers or fruit. It does better in drier areas and needs good drainage. A well distributed rainfall of about 100 cm per year is suitable. Well established trees can tolerate a low temperature of -11°C. The killing temperature for the flower bud is about -7°C, and for the mature flower about -2°C. At -4°C the seed is killed, causing the fruit to fall. Trees need good drainage and do best in full sunlight. Trees can stand drought but yield best with water at flowering and fruit development. It can grow in arid places. In Brisbane Botanical Gardens. In Nepal they grow between 1300-2000 m altitude. It suits hardiness zones 8-11. In Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It can be grown from cuttings or layering. It can also be grown from seeds or by grafting. Seeds grow easily. Seeds need a temperature of 13-16°C or above to germinate. Trees should be planted in groups to cross pollinate. A spacing of 6 m is suitable. Trees grow quickly. Trees need light pruning of the tips of branches to maintain tree shape and avoid excessively thin fruit bearing branches.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Seedling trees begin to bear in 6-8 years compared with 2-3 years for grafted trees. A tree can last 40 years. Biennial bearing occurs. Thinning in heavy bearing years can give larger fruit. The fruiting is seasonal. The season is August to October in the Southern Hemisphere. Fruit should be allowed to ripen fully before harvesting. Fruit reach maturity after about 90 days from full flowering. Ripe fruit can be stored in a refrigerator for 1 to 2 weeks. A tree may produce 20-45 kg per year.

NOTES

There are 30 *Eriobotrya* species. The leaves are used in medicine to boost insulin and lower diabetes.

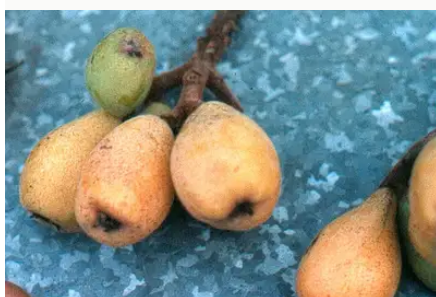
PICTURES



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