PLANT FACT SHEET

Butia capitata (C. Mart.) Becc.

GENUS *Butia* **FAMILY** Arecaceae

COMMON NAMES Jelly palm, Pindo palm

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Seeds - oil, Stem

The fruit is eaten fresh and used in jelly.
It is also used for wine.
The seed is a minor source of oil.

DESCRIPTION

A small palm. It grows up to 5 m tall. It has 40-50 leaves. The trunk has a pattern from the old leaf stubs. The trunk is stout and woody. The leaves hang over and are blue-green. They are 1.3-2 m long and the leaflets form a V shape. Along the edge of the leaf stalk there are sharp spines. The leaflets are 0.8 m long and 2-3 cm wide. The flowers are small and cream. They are 3-8 mm long. They occur as many small flowers along a 1 m long flower stalk. Separate male and female flowers occur along the same stalk. Pollination is by wind and insect. The fruit are yellow to orange and 2-3 cm across. They occur in bunches. The fruit are round with one seed inside. The fruit are edible.

HABITAT

They can grow in cool climates. It suits temperate and subtropical climates. It is frost hardy. They can tolerate temperatures down to -9°C. They are very wind tolerant. They do best in a sunny position. They are drought tolerant but benefit from watering. They often grow in drier regions. It needs well drained soil. It can grow in arid places. In Melbourne Botanical Gardens. It suits hardiness zones 8-11. Hobart Botanical Gardens. In Townsville palmetum. National Arboretum Canberra.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. Seed germinate in about 6 months. Seed germinate more quickly if they have been dried and stored. Seed have a hard woody coat which can make them difficult to germinate. Soaking in warm water helps.

Harvesting and Seed Production

They grow slowly. The fruit is picked as they ripen. If the whole bunch is removed the fruit ripen all at once. The fruit can be stored for about one week under refrigeration.

NOTES

There are about 9 Butea species.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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