PLANT FACT SHEET

Vasconcellea quercifolia St. Hill

GENUS *Vasconcellea* **FAMILY** Caricaceae

COMMON NAMES Oak leafed papaya

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Branches, Stems

The fruit are eaten candied or made into preserves.
The fruit can be eaten raw.
The branches are used to make sweets.

DESCRIPTION

A tree. It grows 4-6 m high. It spreads 1.8 m wide. The trunk is not woody. The trunk has leaf scars. The leaves have 3 lobes. The leaves are 30 cm wide. The leaves are thin and a lighter green underneath. Male and female trees are separate. The male flowers are on side stalks and the female flowers are usually single or in small groups on the main stem. The fruit are 25 cm long. They are orange. The fruit can be bitter. Both male and female trees are needed. It can produce large numbers of small fruit.

HABITAT

It grows naturally in semi-deciduous high altitude forest in Brazil. It has been recorded at 3,500 m altitude in tropical America. It can tolerate temperatures down to -5°C. It suits subtropical and warm temperate climates. It suits hardiness zones 10-11.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seed. The ripe fruit are harvested and the seeds removed under running water. They are dried slightly in the shade then planted while fresh. Seeds germinate in a few days. Plants can also be grown by branch cuttings.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Plants grow quickly. Plants take 2-3 years to fruit.

NOTES

There are at least 22-40 species of Carica.

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