PLANT FACT SHEET

Muntingia calabura L.

GENUS *Muntingia* **FAMILY** Muntingiaceae

COMMON NAMES Panama berry

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Leaves - tea

The berries are eaten raw. They can be used for jam. They can be used for pies and tarts or added to cereals. The leaves can be used for tea.

DESCRIPTION

A small tree up to 5-12 m high. The trunk is 15-20 cm across. Branches are wide spreading and almost horizontal. The young shoots are covered with hairs. The leaves are alternate and elliptical. They are 4-5 cm long and 3-4 cm wide. The leaves are unequal at the base. The leaves have teeth along the edge. The leaf is dark green on top and dull below. The flowers are small and white or cream. They occur as one or two in the axils of leaves. The fruit stalk is 1.5 cm long. The fruit are small red berries 1-2 cm across. They have many tiny seeds. The fruit are edible.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It is native to the West Indies and South America. They suit sandy coral soils of low islands. They grow from sea level up to about 1000 m altitude in the tropics. They need a warm, sunny, sheltered position. In Argentina it grows up to 1,000 m above sea level. It suits hardiness zones 10-12. In XTBG Yunnan. At ECHO.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Trees can be grown from seed. They can also be grown from cuttings of half ripe wood. Seed germinate more readily if they have passed through bats. This means the plant often spreads naturally. Seedlings do not tolerate shade.

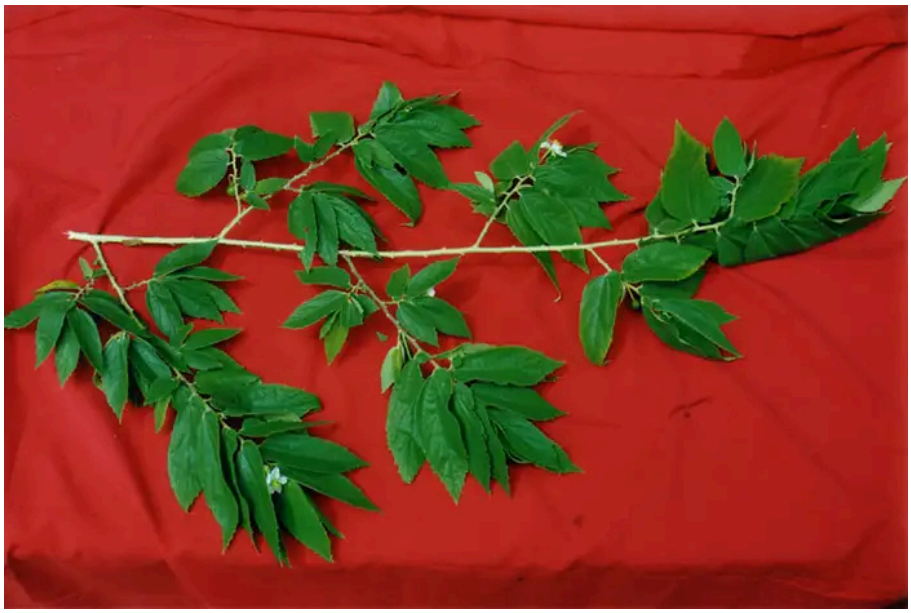
Harvesting and Seed Production

Trees grow fairly quickly. Fruit is produced in the second year. Trees flower and produce fruit all year round. Fruit ripen in 6-8 weeks.

NOTES

There is only one Muntingia species. It has also been put in the family Elaeocarpaceae.

PICTURES



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

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