PLANT FACT SHEET

Garcinia kola Heckel

GENUS *Garcinia* **FAMILY** Clusiaceae

COMMON NAMES Bitter Kola, False Kola

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds, Fruit, Bark - drink

The fruit are chewed as a stimulant. They are chewed with Cola nuts.
The fruit are very sour but are sometimes eaten.
The seed or nut is chewed raw but is bitter.
The bark is used as a flavouring in an alcoholic drink. Caution: Alcohol is a cause of cancer.

DESCRIPTION

A medium sized tree. It grows to 12 m high. It can reach 28 m high. The crown is spreading. The trunk is straight. The bark is brown. The branches droop. The leaves are 3.5-14 cm long and 2.5-6 cm wide. They are leathery. The leaf stalk is stout and about 6 mm long. The flowers are greenish-white. The flowers contain both sexes but there are also male flowers. The flowers have fine hairs. The fruit are reddish-yellow. They are 6 cm across. They contain 2-4 brown seeds. These are in an orange coloured pulp. Both the pulp and seed are edible.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It grows in the understorey in the forest.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Seeds are difficult to germinate. They can be harvested fresh and then incubated in a banana stem for 3 weeks. Alternatively a poly-ethylene bag is used.

Harvesting and Seed Production

It takes 8 years to grow to 12 m tall.

NOTES

There are about 300 Garcinia species.

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