PLANT FACT SHEET

Diospyros virginiana L.

GENUS *Diospyros* **FAMILY** Ebenaceae

COMMON NAMES American persimmon

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Leaves - tea, Seeds - coffee

The fruit are eaten raw once ripe. They are also used in cakes, breads, pies, puddings and for jam and pancakes. They can also be dried for later use.
They have been used for bread.
They have been fermented into beer or wine or vinegar.
The leaves can be used for a tea. Roasted seeds have been used as a coffee substitute.

DESCRIPTION

A medium sized deciduous tree. It can be 30 m tall. In cultivation it is often only 6-9 m high. The bark is dark brown to black. It cracks into small squares. The leaves are alternate. The leaves are oval and 12 cm long by 7.5 cm across. They are pointed and do not have teeth. The flowers are separately male and female and on separate plants. They are bell shaped and about 1 cm long. The flowers are cream. The male flowers occur in clusters and the female ones occur singly. The fruit are small to medium sized and sweet. They are 3-4.5 cm across. They are green and ripen to reddish yellow or orange. They are sweet and edible.

HABITAT

It is a temperate plant. It is native to the Eastern United States. It grows naturally in river valley forests. It is cold hardy when dormant and mature. Trees need 300 chill hours. It suits hardiness zones 5-9.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown by seed. It can be grown by cuttings or from suckers and by grafting.

Harvesting and Seed Production

A mature tree can produce 45 kg of fruit in one year.

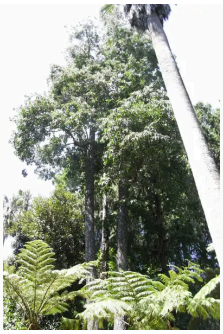
NOTES

There are about 485 species of Diospyros mostly in the tropics.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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