PLANT FACT SHEET

Crataegus azarolus L.

GENUS *Crataegus* **FAMILY** Rosaceae

COMMON NAMES Mediterranean medlar, Azarole

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, bud, Leaves

The fruit can be eaten raw or cooked and used in pies and preserves. They can be dried. They are used for jam. They can be used for marmalade and wines.
The flowers can be used in liqueurs.
The young buds and leaves are used in salads.

DESCRIPTION

A small tree to 4-10 m high. The tree has thorns. The leaves are divided a bit like fingers on a hand. The flowers are small and white. The flowers have a bad smell which attract midges which are important for fertilisation. Fruit can be 2.5 cm across. They are red or yellow. There are 5 seeds inside. The seeds often cling together.

HABITAT

It suits warm temperate areas. When young it needs a well drained moisture retaining soil but once established can grow in very wet soils and survive drought. It grows in areas with an annual rainfall between 400-1,200 mm. It can grow on chalky soils but also heavy clays. Sun is required for good fruit production. It can grow in arid places. Temperate. It suits hardiness zones 6-10.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Seed can be used. Seed are slow and irregular germinating. They can take 4 years to germinate. Fresh seed is best but if seed is stored it should be warm stratified at 15°C for 3 months then cold stratified at 4°C for three months. It can still take 18 months to germinate. They should be transplanted before 2 years. Plants can be grafted onto common hawthorn stock.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Seedling trees take 5-8 years before bearing fruit. Grafted trees bear well in the third year. Fruit is sweeter in warmer climates.

NOTES

There are 200 or more Crataegus species.

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