PLANT FACT SHEET

Polyalthia longifolia (Lamk.) Benth. & Hook.f.

GENUS *Polyalthia* **FAMILY** Annonaceae

COMMON NAMES "Custard apple", False ashoka, Indian Mast Tree

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Leaves

The fruit are eaten in times of scarcity.

DESCRIPTION

This tree grows up to 14 to 28 m tall. It is an evergreen tree keeping its leaves throughout the year. The bark can become gnarled and distorted. The trunk is straight. The leaves are long and narrow with a wavy margin. They are 22 cm long. They are dark green and shiny. New leaf growth is yellow. It has small flowers 2 cm across. The flowers are greenish yellow and have an appearance like a star. They occur in bunches. The small plum like fruit which develop change from green to black when ripe. They contain a ringed seed. The fruit are 2 cm across. There is a variety where the branches hang down (var. pendula)

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It is native to India and Sri Lanka. It grows in India on the Deccan. It grows in lowland rainforest. It can grow in dry forest. It needs a fertile, well drained soil. It needs full sun. It is cultivated between 300-400 m altitude in southern China. It suits hardiness zones 11-12. In Yunnan. In the Cairns Botanical Gardens.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It can be grown from seed which germinate in 2 to 6 weeks. The seedling trees grow quickly but older trees grow more slowly. It can also be grown from cuttings.

Harvesting and Seed Production

It is slow growing. The fruit ripen quickly.

NOTES

The wood is used.
There is some confusion over the species with 2 different authorities.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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WATT. (As Guatteria longifolia)

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