PLANT FACT SHEET

Horsfieldia australiana S.T. Blake

GENUS *Horsfieldia* **FAMILY** Myristicaceae

COMMON NAMES Cape nutmeg

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: seeds, Nuts

The kernel of the fruit is eaten raw.

DESCRIPTION

A tree. It grows 10-120 m high and spreads 3-6 m wide. It has a dense spreading crown. The bark is slightly rough and cream and blotchy. It flakes and has fine cracks along it. The stem has a distinct ridge which zigzags from leaf to leaf. The leaves are simple, alternate and smooth and leathery or papery. They are oblong and 16-28 cm long by 4.5-7 cm wide. They are shiny dark green on top and paler underneath. The tip of the leaf is rounded or slightly pointed. There are 12-15 pairs of side veins. The leaf stalk is thick and curved. It is about 1 cm long. Male and female flowers occur on separate trees. The flowers are very small and orange-yellow. Male flowers have a spicy scent and are 0.2 cm across. They occur in dense clusters in the axils of leaves. The female flowers are nearly round and in flower clusters 1.5-2.5 cm long. The fruit are smooth and oblong. They are 4 cm long by 2.5 cm across. They hang in clusters along the stalk. They are pale yellow when ripe. The fruit stalk is very short. Inside is one seed covered by a fleshy orange-red aril. The seed is 1.5 cm long.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows naturally in thick monsoon forest near freshwater streams. It is often on moist organic soils in sandstone country. They need deep, well drained soils. It requires ample moisture. In tropical Queensland it grows from sea level to 450 m altitude. In Townsville palmetum.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seed. The seed should be sown fresh.

Harvesting and Seed Production

In Australia, trees flower from August to October and fruit from November to January (January to March).

NOTES

There are about 88 Horsfieldia species.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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