PLANT FACT SHEET

Carissa congesta Wight

GENUS *Carissa* **FAMILY** Apocynaceae

COMMON NAMES Bengal currant

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit

Fruit can be eaten fresh or used for juice or jelly. The can be very sour but ripe fruit are sweet. They are used for puddings, pickles, jams or as cooked fruit.
The unripe fruit are pickled.

DESCRIPTION

A shrub or small tree. It grows to 3-5 m tall. It can spread like a vine. It is thorny and prickly. The spines can be simple or forked and up to 5 cm long. It produces latex. The bark is pale brown or greyish and not very rough. The leaves are in opposite pairs. They taper at the base and are rounded at the tip. The tip has a tiny sharp point. Young leaves are red. The flowers are small and white. They are 3.5 cm across and tube shaped. They occur at the ends of the twigs. There are 5 pointy petals that overlap to the right. The fruit are pinkish or reddish-purple berries. They are 2.5 cm long. They have juicy acid pulp.

HABITAT

A tropical and subtropical plant. Salt tolerance is high. In Nepal it grows to 1000 m altitude. It suits dry sunny places. In India they are common on dry, sandy or loamy soils in the plains and low hills. It is very hardy and drought tolerant. It cannot tolerate heavy rainfall or waterlogged soils.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seed. Plants can be kept clipped into a shrub otherwise they will be a climbing creeper. Plants can be grown from cuttings. Plants are often grown as a hedge.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Plants grown from seed fruit is the third year. A plant can keep producing for 30 years. A plant produces 4-5 kg of fruit. Fruit mature 100-110 days after fruit set. The fruit become darker and softer on ripening. In southern India plants fruit in April to May.

NOTES

There about 20-37 Carissa species. All Carissa species bear edible fruit. They grow in the tropics and subtropics. Now Carissa spinarum.

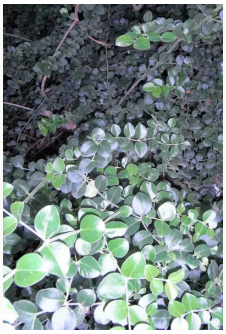
PICTURES



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