PLANT FACT SHEET

Sterculia quadrifida R. Br.

GENUS *Sterculia* **FAMILY** Malvaceae

COMMON NAMES Peanut tree, Red-fruited Kurrajong

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds, Leaves - flavouring, Roots

The seeds are eaten raw. When peeled they have a pleasant peanut like taste. They are also cooked. They are harvested after the fruit is ripe and fully open.
The leaves are used to sweeten meat.
The roots of young plants can be eaten raw or cooked.

DESCRIPTION

A small to medium sized tree. It grows up to 5-12-20 m tall. It has an open rounded crown. It is a straggly plant and the smaller stems are thick. The bark is smooth and grey. The leaves are long and heart shaped. They are 9-23 cm long by 5.5-17.5 cm wide. They are dark green and rough with prominent veins. They are paler and finely hairy underneath. The leaves fall off during the year. The leaf stalk is 4-10 cm long. The flowers are small, greenish-yellow and not easily noticed. They are produced in flower heads towards the ends of branches. The sepals of the flower remain joined forming a tube which is bell-shaped. They are 0.5-1 cm long by 0.5 cm wide. The outer surface is green and hairy. Several flowers occur together in flower arrangements that are 3-10 cm long. The fruit are groups of leathery pods or capsules carried stiffly on the stems. The fruit are 5-8 cm across by 3-4 cm long. The skin is rough velvety and leathery and turns red when ripe. The ripe pods split to show the light shiny inner surface and black seeds. There are 2-8 shiny seeds. The seeds are 1-2 cm long. The seeds are edible.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows naturally in coastal monsoon vine thickets and on sand dunes behind the beach. It can be grown on a wide variety of well-drained soils. It has some tolerance to drought. Melbourne Botanical Gardens. It suits hardiness zones 10-12.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. Fresh seed germinate in a few days. Germination can be improved by pouring hot water over the seeds and allowing them to soak for 24 hours.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Young plants are fast growing. In Australia, flowering occurs from February to November and fruiting from April to December.

NOTES

Also put in the family Sterculiaceae.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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