PLANT FACT SHEET

Melocanna baccifera (Roxb.) Kurz.

GENUS *Melocanna* **FAMILY** Poaceae

COMMON NAMES Berry bamboo, Mali bamboo

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Seeds, Cereal, Shoots

The young shoots are cooked and eaten. They can be sliced and dried in the sun for storage. They are also fermented in chutney.
The fruit are fleshy and edible. They are a famine food.

DESCRIPTION

An evergreen bamboo. The culms are single and spread 60 cm apart. They come from a long creeping rhizome. They are bright green and 8-15 m long by 4-6 cm wide. The internodes are 30-50 cm long. The walls are thin. They are about 6 mm thick. The culm sheath is 13-18 cm long. The blade is long and narrow and tapers to the tip. It is 30 cm long and 2.5 cm wide. The flowers droop. There are branches along one side with clusters of 3-4 spikelets. These are 1.2 cm long and spiny. The fruit are 10 cm long by 7.5 cm wide. They are fleshy and pear shaped. There is a curved beak at the end. There can be 8-10 fruit in a cluster around each node. Flowering occurs at intervals of about 30 years.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It is usually on hilly ground. It grows best with temperatures between 20-33°C and an annual rainfall between 2,000-3,000 mm. It can grow in sun or light shade.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seeds.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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