PLANT FACT SHEET

Pistacia lentiscus L.

GENUS *Pistacia* **FAMILY** Anacardiaceae

COMMON NAMES Mastic Tree, Mastic shrub

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Nuts, leaves - condiment, Spice, Resin, Gum, Seeds, Oil

The nut inside the fruit is edible. They are eaten raw or roasted.
The sap is used to flavour an alcoholic beverage. Caution: Alcohol is a cause of cancer.
It is also used in puddings, cookies, cakes and candies.
The gum is used for texture and binding but gives some flavour. It is chewed as a breath freshener.
It is sweet and has a liquorice flavour. The seeds yield an edible oil.
The young leaves and leaf buds are eaten. They can be eaten raw as a snack or in yoghurt salad.

DESCRIPTION

A small evergreen shrub. It grows to about 1-3 m high and can spread to 3 m wide. It can be 7 m high. The leaves are 10 cm long and there are wings on the leaf stalk. The leaves are compound with several pairs (2-7) of leathery leaflets. There is no leaflet at the end. The flowers are at the tips of shoots. The male flowers are in dense panicles 3 cm long with red stamens. The female flowers are greenish and in 6 cm long loose panicles. The fruit are round and red. The fruit are 5 mm across and become black when they are ripe.

HABITAT

It is a Mediterranean climate plant. It will grow on most soils. It likes a protected sunny position. It cannot grow in shade. It is drought and frost tender. It suits hardiness zones 8-11.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seed.

Harvesting and Seed Production

It is slow growing. Mastic production can commence at 5-6 years and yield 1 kg per tree by 15 years old. They take 40-50 years to become well established. Production declines after 70 years. Trees can live for 200 years. When the bark is cut it yields a clear resinous substance which coagulates to give gum mastic. The "tears" of gum are 3-5 mm long.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

REFERENCES

Ali-Shtayeh, M. S., et al, 2008, Traditional knowledge of wild edible plants used in Palestine (Northern West Bank): A comparative study. J Ethnobiol Ethnomed. 2008; 4: 13.

Ambasta, S.P. (Ed.), 2000, The Useful Plants of India. CSIR India. p 463

Benitez, G., et al, 2023, Wild Edible Plants of Andalusia: Traditional Uses and Potential of Eating Wild in a Highly Diverse Region. Plants 2023, 12, 1218 p 11

Blamey, M and Grey-Wilson, C., 2005, Wild flowers of the Mediterranean. A & C Black London. p 127

Blanco-Salas, J., et al, 2019, Wild Plants Potentially Used in Human Food in the Protected Area "Sierra Grande de Hornachos" of Extremadura (Spain). Sustainability 2019, 11, 456

Bodkin, F., 1991, Encyclopedia Botanica. Cornstalk publishing, p 805

Bremness, L., 1994, Herbs. Collins Eyewitness Handbooks. Harper Collins. p 74

Brickell, C. (Ed.), 1999, The Royal Horticultural Society A-Z Encyclopedia of Garden Plants. Convent Garden Books. p 805

Burkill, I.H., 1966, A Dictionary of the Economic Products of the Malay Peninsula. Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Vol 2 (I-Z) p 1786

Ciftcioglu, C. G., 2015, Sustainable wild-collection of medicinal and edible plants in Lefke region of North Cyprus. Agroforest Syst. Springer

Cundall, P., (ed.), 2004, Gardening Australia: flora: the gardener's bible. ABC Books. p 1053

Della, A., et al, 2006, An ethnobotanical survey of wild edible plants of Paphos and Larnaca countryside of Cyprus. J. Ethnobiol. Ethnomed. 2:34

Dogan, Y., et al, 2004, The Use of Wild Edible Plants in Western and Central Anatolia (Turkey). Economic Botany 58(4) pp. 684-690

Ertug, F., 2004, Wild Edible Plants of the Bodrum Area. (Mugla, Turkey). Turk. J. Bot. 28 (2004): 161-174

Ertug, F, Yenen Bitkiler. Resimli Türkiye Florası -I- Flora of Turkey - Ethnobotany supplement

Facciola, S., 1998, Cornucopia 2: a Source Book of Edible Plants. Kampong Publications, p 172

Flowerdew, B., 2000, Complete Fruit Book. Kyle Cathie Ltd., London. p 202

Hadjichambis, A. C., et al, 2007, Wild and semi-domesticated food plant consumption in seven circum-Mediterranean areas. International Journal of Food Sciences and Nutrition. 2007, 1-32.

Hedrick, U.P., 1919, (Ed.), Sturtevant's edible plants of the world. p 501

Hemphill, I, 2002, Spice Notes. Macmillan. p 239

Heywood, V.H., Brummitt, R.K., Culham, A., and Seberg, O. 2007, Flowering Plant Families of the World. Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew. p 30

http://cypruswildflowers.com

http://www.botanic-gardens-ljubljana.com/en/plants

Kermath, B. M., et al, 2014, Food Plants in the Americas: A survey of the domesticated, cultivated and wild plants used for Human food in North, Central and South America and the Caribbean. On line draft. p 667

Kiple, K.F. & Ornelas, K.C., (eds), 2000, The Cambridge World History of Food. CUP p 433, 1811

Landau, S., et al, 2014, Traditional Uses of Pistacia lentiscus in Veterinary and Human Medicine, in Z. Yaniv, N. Dudai (eds.), Medicinal and Aromatic Plants of the Middle-East, Springer

Lyle, S., 2006, Discovering fruit and nuts. Land Links. p 330

Mahklouf, M. H., 2019, Ethnobotanical Study of Edible Wild Plants in Libya. European Journal of Ecology. 5(2): 30-40

Martin, F.W. & Ruberte, R.M., 1979, Edible Leaves of the Tropics. Antillian College Press, Mayaguez, Puerto Rico. p 99

Menninger, E.A., 1977, Edible Nuts of the World. Horticultural Books. Florida p 53

Morley, B. & Everard, B., 1970, Wild Flowers of the World. Ebury press. Plate 30

Mulherin, J., 1994, Spices and natural flavourings. Tiger Books, London. p 16

Peters, C. R., O'Brien, E. M., and Drummond, R.B., 1992, Edible Wild plants of Sub-saharan Africa. Kew. p 50

Pieroni, A., et al, 2024, Isolated Mediterranean foraging: wild greens in the matrifocal community of Olympos, Karpathos Island, Greece. Journal of Ethnobiology and Ethnomedicine (2024) 20:98

PROSEA handbook Volume 13 Spices. p 279

Redzic, S. J., 2006, Wild Edible Plants and their Traditional Use in the Human Nutrition in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Ecology of Food and Nutrition, 45:189-232

Sfikas, G., 1984, Trees and shrubs of Greece. Efstathiadis Group. Athens. p 120

Sp. pl. 2:1026. 1753

Tardio, J., et al, 2006, Ethnobotanical review of wild edible plants in Spain. Botanical J. Linnean Soc. 152 (2006), 27-71

Tardio, J., et al, Ethnobotanical review of wild edible plants in Spain. Botanical J. Linnean Soc. 152 (2006), 27-71

Wiersema, J. H. & Leon, B., 2013, World Economic Plants. A Standard Reference CRC Press. 2nd Ed. p 536

Wild Edible Plants in Lebanon. Promoting dietary diversity in poor communities in Lebanon. http://www.wildedibleplants.org/

World Checklist of Useful Plant Species 2020. Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

Zeven, A. C. & de West, J. M. J., 1982, Dictionary of cultivated plants and their regions of diversity. Wageningen. p 117

PROVIDED BY **Food Plants International**

French, B.R. & Maynard, A.R. Food Plants International Database. Food Plants International

LICENCE CC BY-NC-SA 3.0

ONLINE FACT SHEET https://www.echocommunity.org/en/resources/5e8d37e8-050b-4a29-bebf-62341aba1b7f