PLANT FACT SHEET

Genipa americana L.

GENUS *Genipa* **FAMILY** Rubiaceae

COMMON NAMES Genipa

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit

Fruit are eaten fresh. They need to be over-ripe. They are acid so are more often used for preserves. They can be made into marmalade or drinks.
The fruit are fermented to make an alcoholic drink. Caution: Alcohol is a cause of cancer.

DESCRIPTION

A medium sized tree. It grows to 10-15 m high. It can be 20 m high. The trunk is 30-80 cm across. The branches come out horizontal. The leaves are opposite. The leaves are near the end of the branches. They are oblong or sword shaped. The leaves are 35-50 cm long by 8-20 cm wide. The flowers are pale yellow with red centres. The fruit grow in clusters. The fruit are large and green. They are round or oval. They are 10-12 cm long by 7-9 cm wide. There are many seeds. They are 8 mm long by 5 mm across.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows in the hot tropical lowlands. It is native to tropical America. It grows in rainfall of 1,500-4,500 mm per year. The temperatures are 22-30°C. It is common in swamp marshes. In Central America it grows from sea level to 1,000 m altitude. In Argentina it grows below 500 m above sea level.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. They can also be grown from large cuttings or by grafting. For seed the ripe fruit are harvested and the seeds removed and washed under running water. They are dried in the shade. Seeds only remain viable for 4 months. Seeds germinate in 25-45 days. Seedlings can be transplanted into the field after 7-9 months.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Plants grow at a moderate rate. They can be 2 m high in 2 years. A fruit is 200-400 g weight. The fruit is often harvested before it is completely mature then stored in the dark until it is ripe.

NOTES

There are 7 Genipa species. The fruit sap blackens the skin. It has antioxidant properties.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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