PLANT FACT SHEET

Byrsonima crassifolia (L.) Kunth.

GENUS *Byrsonima* **FAMILY** Malpighiaceae

COMMON NAMES Nance, Golden spoon

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit

The fruit are eaten fresh. They are also used in desserts, jams, soups, and stuffings for meat.
They are also used in drinks. In Panama they are fermented to make a drink called Chica.
An edible fat is extracted from the fruit with boiling water.
Caution: There has been some concern about the fruit causing gastrointestinal disorders.

DESCRIPTION

A medium sized evergreen tree. It grows 2-10 m tall. The bark is cracked. The leaves are simple and opposite. They are 7-15 cm long by 3-7 cm wide. They are rich green and shiny but paler underneath. The veins and leaf stalks are a rusty red colour. The flowers are rich yellow and have a crumpled appearance. The flowers are held in erect, hairy racemes. These are 6-15 cm long. The fruit are small and sweet and green when young but orange-yellow when ripe. They are 1-5 cm across. They have an aroma. They have a thin skin and white, juicy pulp.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It suits hot tropical lowlands. It is native to C. and S. America. In the Amazon it grows to 2,000 m altitude. It can tolerate some drought and has wind resistance. It suits subtropical climates but is not very hardy. It will grow on poor soils. It can tolerate salty soils. It can grow in arid places. It suits hardiness zones 9-12.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. The seeds are collected from ripe fruit are the flesh removed by allowing them to partly decompose in a plastic bag. The pulp is removed under running water. Seeds need to be planted fresh. They are best in light shade. Seedlings emerge in 25-35 days.

Harvesting and Seed Production

It is a slow growing tree.

NOTES

There are 127 Byrsonima species. They grow in tropical America. The roots and stems have anti-bacterial activity.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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