PLANT FACT SHEET

Terminalia prunioides M. A. Lawson

GENUS *Terminalia* **FAMILY** Combretaceae

COMMON NAMES Lowveld terminalia, Purple-pod terminalia

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Gum, Leaves - tea, Fruit, Seeds, Seeds - coffee

The gum exuded from the tree is edible.
The young twigs are boiled in water to make tea.
The fresh leaves are used for tea.
The seeds are used for coffee. They are ground and boiled with milk and sugar.
The seeds are eaten raw.
The fruit are eaten as a desert fruit. They are also used as a tea.

DESCRIPTION

A bushy shrub and also a medium sized tree. It grows 5-15 m tall. It can have a girth of 1.5 m. It can have one or many stems. The bark is light grey and ribbed along its length. The branches hang over. The short twigs point upwards and at right angles to the branches. The leaves and flowers are crowded at the ends of the small branches. The bark on the twigs strips off in short lengths. The leaves are small. They are 1.3-5 cm long by 2.5 cm across. They are oval and often widest in the upper half and taper to the base. The leaves are dark green on the upper surface and lighter green and hairy underneath. The flowers are small and starry. They are white with a puff of yellow stamens. They are in lax spikes at the ends of short branches. They have a strong scent. The fruit are 3.5-5 cm long and oval. The seed in the thickened centre is surrounded by a tough flat wing. They turn deep wine red when ripe.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows in frost free areas. It likes shade. It can grow on sandy or stony soils. It grows naturally in low altitude open woodland and scrub. It occurs on rocky slopes and deep alluvial soils of low altitude rivers. It is very drought resistant. It grows between 30-1,400 m above sea level. It can grow in arid places. In Brisbane Botanical Gardens.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seeds. The seeds germinate easily. It is best to remove the wings and then soak the seeds for a few hours before sowing. Seeds germinate in about 3 weeks.

Harvesting and Seed Production

It can grow to about 6 m in 15 years. They flower in spring and summer.

NOTES

There are about 200-250 Terminalia species. They are tropical.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

REFERENCES

Fowler, D. G., 2007, Zambian Plants: Their Vernacular Names and Uses. Kew. p 20

Lee, 1979,

Mahony, D., 1991, Trees of Somalia. A Field Guide for Development Workers. Oxfam Research Paper 3. p 9

Magwede, K., van Wyk, B.-E., & van Wyk, A. E., 2019, An inventory of Vhavendā useful plants. South African Journal of Botany 122 (2019) 57–89

D. Oliver, Fl. trop. Afr. 2:415. 1871

Palgrave, K.C., 1996, Trees of Southern Africa. Struik Publishers. p 682

Palmer, E and Pitman, N., 1972, Trees of Southern Africa. Vol. 3. A.A. Balkema, Cape Town p 1657

Peters, C. R., O'Brien, E. M., and Drummond, R.B., 1992, Edible Wild plants of Sub-saharan Africa. Kew. p 87

Roodt, V., 1998, Trees & Shrubs of the Okavango Delta. Medicinal Uses and Nutritional value. The Shell Field Guide Series: Part 1. Shell Botswana. p 63

Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew (1999). Survey of Economic Plants for Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (SEPASAL) database. Published on the Internet; http://www.rbgkew.org.uk/ceb/sepasal/internet [Accessed 10th April 2011]

Ruiters-Welcome, A. K., 2019, Food plants of southern Africa. Ph.D. thesis. Univ. of Johannesburg p 45

Sullivan, S., 1998, People plants and practice in drylands: Socio-political and ecological dimensions of resource-use by Damara farmers in north-west Namibia. Ph.D. Univ. College London. p 31

van Wyk, B, van Wyk, P, and van Wyk B., 2000, Photographic guide to Trees of Southern Africa. Briza. p 306

Welcome, A. K. & Van Wyk, B.-E., 2019, An inventory and analysis of the food plants of southern Africa. South African Journal of Botany 122 (2019) 136–179

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

www.worldagroforestrycentre.org/treedb/

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/6aa0f13e-fec1-4007-b547-cdfe15930dfd