PLANT FACT SHEET

Pithecellobium dulce (Roxb.) Benth.

GENUS *Pithecellobium* **FAMILY** Fabaceae

COMMON NAMES Madras thorn fruit

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, seeds - aril, Pods, Seeds, Seeds - oil

The fleshy pulp around the seeds in the pods is eaten raw.
The roasted seeds are eaten. They are also mixed with curries.
The seed oil is eaten.
CAUTION It is recorded as causing haematuria.

DESCRIPTION

A shrub or small tree. It grows up to 10 m tall but can be 15-25 m tall. The trunk can be 50-60 cm across. There are many branches. The branches are spiny. These are in pairs and are 4-10 mm long. The young leaves are usually reddish. The leaves are twice compound with four leaflets. There is a small spine between the leaflets. The flowers are greenish white in rounded dense heads about 1 cm across. The pods are often twisted spirally. They are 10 to 18 cm long and red when ripe. They are about 1 cm wide and contain 6 to 8 black shiny seeds surrounded by a white to red fleshy aril or pulp. The seeds are flattened and 9 mm long by 7 mm wide and 2 mm thick.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It is native to C and S America. Common and widely distributed throughout the Philippines. It suits dry coastal areas probably below 800 m altitude. It can grow in low and medium altitudes and in wet and dry areas. It needs light. It can tolerate drought. It can grow on a range of soil types. Well drained soils are best but it can grow in clay soils. In Nepal it grows to about 700 m altitude. It can grow in arid places. In XTBG Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown by seeds or cuttings. Seed takes 2 weeks to germinate. Plants can be grown by marcottage, grafting or budding. Pods can be harvested by climbing or using long bamboo poles.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Plants grow quickly. They can be pruned and cut back to regrow. Seedling trees take 5-8 years to start producing fruit. Pods ripen 2-3 months after flowering. Pods split open at maturity so they need to be eaten within a few days.

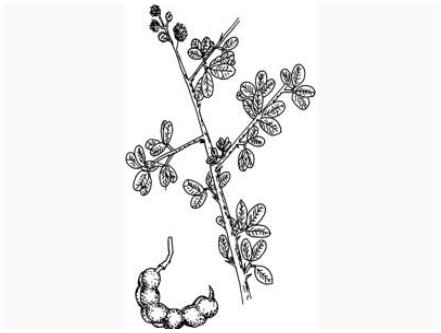
NOTES

Also as Mimosaceae.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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