PLANT FACT SHEET

Buchanania arborescens (Blume) Blume

GENUS *Buchanania* **FAMILY** Anacardiaceae

COMMON NAMES Little Gooseberry tree, Beach Berry, Green plum

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit

The fruit are eaten raw. They are sweet.
The fruit can be used to make drinks.

DESCRIPTION

A medium sized evergreen tree. It grows 10-15 m high and with a spread of 3 m. The tree shape is like a cone, not an umbrella. It has round branches and a smooth tip. The leaves come one after the other around the branch and are crowded near the ends of branches. The young shoots are covered with silky hairs. New growth is bronze red. The leaves are darker green on the upper surface. They are shiny and stiff and look like mango leaves. The leaves are 5-26 cm long by 2-7 cm wide. The veins and mid rib show up clearly. The leaf stalk is 4-6 cm long. The flowers are dull white to cream and very small (0.2-0.4 cm long) in long flowering branches. These flowering branches occur on the ends of branches or in the angles of upper leaves. At flowering time the whole tree has a white display of flowers. The flowers have a sweet smell. Only one of the five female flower parts is fertile producing fruit. The fruit are berries (drupes) and on short stalks. They are hard, smooth and dull red or purple. They are about 1 cm across and flattish. It is an attractive ornamental and shade producing tree.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. They are found throughout the islands of the Philippines in the lower wooded regions. It is also native to Australia occurring in the northern tip regions. It prefers rich, moist, well drained soils in a sunny position but often occurs on sandstone hills. Often trees are found near monsoon forest beside freshwater streams. It gets damaged by both drought and frost. It is very frost sensitive. In north Thailand it grows below 1,200 m above sea level. It can be in mangrove swamps and coastal thickets.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It can be grown from seed or by cuttings. Seeds should be planted in well drained soil. It needs to be kept well watered.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Flowering in the southern hemisphere occurs August to October and fruiting follows November to December being ready to harvest in January.

NOTES

There are about 25 Buchanania species. The first part of the scientific name is after Claudius Buchanan a Scottish chaplain to the East India Company in the 1800's.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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