PLANT FACT SHEET

Leea guineensis G. Don

GENUS *Leea* **FAMILY** Vitaceae

COMMON NAMES West Indian holly

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Leaves

Caution: The juice from the berries is reported as being irritating to flesh.
The ripe fruit are eaten fresh.

DESCRIPTION

A shrub or small tree. It grows 5-8 m high. The leaves are alternate. They are 25-80 cm long. They vary in shape, even on a single plant. They can be simple, or divided once or twice into leaflets. The leaf stalk is usually rounded. The upper end of the leaf stalk has a groove. The leaflets can be oval, rounded or wedge shaped. The leaflet at the end is larger than the side leaflets and on a longer stalk. The flower clusters occur opposite leaves and have a flat top. They can be 10-20 cm across. The flowers are greenish-white and individual flowers are 7-8 mm across. The petals eventually curve backwards. The fruit are flattened, round berries which have 4-6 lobes. They are 9-12 mm across. They are a dull green. There are 4-6 seeds inside. The fruit are edible. (The leaves and flowers are a little like elder.)

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It needs moderate moisture and humidity. It grows on the forest floor. It can tolerate low light. It needs moderately fertile and well-drained soil. In Nigeria it is recorded up to 1,800 m above sea level. It suits hardiness zones 10-12.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seed or cuttings.

Harvesting and Seed Production

In northeastern India they flower August to October and fruit from October to March. In Central African Republic plants have been recorded flowering and fruiting in July.

NOTES

Also put in the family Leeaceae. These occur in the tropics. There are about 70 Leea species.
In The Plant List Leea guineense and Leea guineensis are both accepted.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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