PLANT FACT SHEET

Terminalia chebula (Gaertn.) Retz.

GENUS *Terminalia* **FAMILY** Combretaceae

COMMON NAMES Myrobalan, Indian gallnut

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: seeds, Nuts, Leaves, Fruit

The bitter green fruit are eaten raw with fish. They are also preserved in brine or fried. They are also dried.
The seed kernels are occasionally eaten.
The seeds also yield an edible oil.
The seeds are used for black salt used as a spice.

DESCRIPTION

A tree. It loses many leaves during the year. It has blackish bark. It is thick and has many cracks along it. It grows 15-30 m tall. The young branches are covered with rusty brown hairs. The leaves have stalks. They can be opposite or alternate. They are 6-17 cm long by 3.5-12 cm wide. They are oval and taper to the tip. The leaf stalk is 2-3 cm long. The flowers do not have stalks. They are yellowish and have a strong odour. They occur in spikes at the ends of branches. Often 4-6 spikes occur together. Flowers contain both sexes. The fruit is a nut. They are thick and hard with a rough surface. The fruit can be 2-6 cm long. They have 5 ribs.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows in dense deciduous forests. In Nepal they grow to about 1100 m altitude. They grow over the plains of India and up to 1500 m altitude. It can grow in clay and sandy soils. In XTBG Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. The seeds should be fermented or have the tip clipped off and soaked in water for 36 hours to break the seed dormancy and allow the seeds to start to grow. It can be grown from branch cuttings. A small branch with 3-4 nodes in used and dipped into rooting hormone. Plants are put at a spacing of 3-5 m.

NOTES

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

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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