PLANT FACT SHEET

Syzygium malaccense (L.) Merr. & L. M. Perry

GENUS *Syzygium* **FAMILY** Myrtaceae

COMMON NAMES Malay-apple

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Flowers, Leaves

The fruit can be eaten fresh or cooked. They are also used in jam and pickles.
The young leaves while still red are eaten.
The flowers have also been recorded as being eaten. They are preserved in syrup or eaten in salads.

DESCRIPTION

An evergreen tree 5 to 25 m tall. It spreads out to 4 m across. Trees tend to branch near the base. Leaves are simple, thick and leathery and shiny on both surfaces. They are large and oval. Leaves can be up to 25-30 cm long and 12 cm wide. The leaves have a vein around the edge of the leaf. Flowers are produced on old wood and on the trunk as well as in the angles where leaves join and at the ends of branches. Flowers are purple, crimson or white and 2.5 cm across. They mostly occur in dense clusters giving a brilliant display. The red stamens are often fallen under the tree. The fruit is rounded or oblong and 5-6 cm across by 6-8 cm long. The fruit has white flesh around a large brown seed. The seed is about 1.3 cm by 1.7 cm. Some kinds are seedless. The skin of the fruit is red or pink with darker stripes. The fruit are edible.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It suits hot, wet tropical lowlands. They grow in coastal areas in the tropics and up to 1000 m altitude. It is a rainforest species. It suits humid locations. They need fertile soil, plenty of moisture, and good drainage. They are sensitive to frost. It does best in an open sunny position. It can tolerate drought but does best where there is an absence of drought. It does not grow on atolls. It will grow with soil pH of 6.1-7.4. They occur in northeast Queensland in Australia and across Malesia. They have also been introduced into other regions. In the Cairns Botanical Gardens. It suits hardiness zones 10-12.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Trees are normally grown from seed. Seeds need to be fresh. Seeds germinate in 2-4 weeks. They can be put in a nursery and transplanted after 8 months. Where termites are a problem damaging seedlings, growing them in light shade reduces the problem. Plants can be grown by budding, grafting, layering or cuttings. Aerial layering is probably the most common method for vegetative propagation. Budding onto rootstocks of the same species have proven successful, but they are rarely successful if rootstocks of related species are used. A spacing of 10 m between trees is suitable.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Flowering and fruiting is seasonal. In the southern hemisphere flowering is about October to November. In northeastern India flowers occur in April to May and fruit occur in May to June. Fruit ripen in 2-3 months. The fruit are ripe January to February. The yield can be 21-85 kg per tree per year.

Planting instructions

Malay apple & laulaus

A group of fruit trees in Papua New Guinea are often called laulaus in Tok Pisin. The naming in Tok Pisin, English and among scientists is confused for the plants in this group. It is not even certain how many different ones have fruit which are eaten in Papua New Guinea. The most likely ones, and the names used in this article are:

English Scientific name
Malay apple Eugenia malaccensis L.
Rose apple Eugenia jambos L.
Watery rose apple Eugenia aquea Burm.f.
Giant laulau Eugenia megacarpa Craib
Java apple Eugenia javanica Lam.
Surinam cherry Eugenia uniflora L.

By some scientists the name Syzygium is used instead of the name Eugenia for the same plants.

There are probably other species in this family also grown and used for their edible fruit in Papua New Guinea especially down in the Western Province near Balimo.

The ones most commonly used in Papua New Guinea seem to be the Malay apple, Watery rose apple and Surinam cherry. These will now be described in more detail.

Malay apple

Scientific name : Eugenia malaccensis

What is the plant like?

This is a medium sized tree up to 20m tall. The tree is cone shaped with branches being shorter near the top.

The leaves are dark green, thick and glossy. The leaves have short thick leaf stalks.

The flowers are in showy clusters with bright red stamens. These fall off and form a carpet of red under the tree.

The fruit are up to 8cm long, rounded in shape and white to red in colour. The skin is thin and the flesh crisp, white and juicy. The fruit contains one round seed.

Watery rose apple

Scientific name: Eugenia aquea.

What is the plant like?

The tree is between 5 and 10 metres tall. The twigs are angular.

The leaves are in opposite pairs, pointed and large (up to 20cm long). Often the leaves don't have a leaf stalk and they clasp the stem. They are shiny on both sides. The leaves are light green.

Flowers are white or pale cream and in clusters. They grow on new wood. They are about 2 cm across.

Fruit are bell shaped and pale green, white, pink or red in colour. The flesh inside is mostly white.

Growing watery rose apple.

Trees grow well in the humid tropics on well drained soil. They will grow up to about 1500m altitude.

Trees are often grown from seed. They can occur wild in the forest where they are looked after or they can be planted. They are easy to grow from cuttings and this method is often used.

Trees need to be 6-8 m apart if several are planted together.

Trees often flower and fruit twice a year.

Surinam cherry

Scientific name:Eugenia uniflora

What is the plant like?

The tree can be grown as a small bush and pruned into a hedge but if given space and good soil can grow up to 7 metres tall.

The leaves are dark green and small(2-5cm long). They are shiny and young leaves are a red colour.

The flowers are small (1-2cm across) and white. They are produced in the axil where the leaf joins the stem.

Fruit are on long slender stems, bright red in colour and 2-3 cm across. The fruit have up to 8 ribs or indented lines around the fruit. Mostly there is one round seed inside. The skin of the fruit is thin and the flesh juicy. The flesh is often red and is sour.

How do you grow Surinam cherry?

Mostly trees are grown from seed. Seeds grow within 3 to 5 weeks. Seeds should be planted from freshly harvested fruit. If the seedlings are put in a nursery they should be transplanted to where they will grow when they are 20cm tall. Grafting of cuttings from better trees can be used.

Trees can start to produce fruit after 3 years.

Trees can be pruned and trained into a hedge. Trees that are pruned often will produce less fruit.

Where do trees grow?

This tree originally came from Brazil. It is tropical but will stand some cold once the trees are growing well. It may grow up to 1700m in Papua New Guinea but is not often seen above about 800m. It is better suited to wet than dry climates.

Rose apple

Scientific name:Eugenia jambos

What is the plant like?

This is a small tree up to 10m tall.

The leaves are thick and shiny. They are long (22cm) and sword shaped, or tapered at each end.

The flowers are greenish white and large (8cm). They are at the end of the small branches or twigs.

Fruit are round (5cm across) and white. At the top of the fruit the thickened parts of the flower (calyx) form a flattened extended end to the fruit. The fruit has one or two seeds inside.

Growing rose apple.

Trees can be grown from seed. Like many of the fruit trees in this family when a seed is planted, several seedlings can grow from the one seed.

PICTURES



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