PLANT FACT SHEET

Harpephyllum caffrum Bernh. ex Krause

GENUS *Harpephyllum* **FAMILY** Anacardiaceae

COMMON NAMES Kaffir plum, Wild plum

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit

The fruit are eaten fresh. It is enjoyed especially by children.
They can be dried and have a pleasant, salty flavour.
They are also used for wine and jelly or jam.

DESCRIPTION

A small evergreen tree. It grows 6-15 m tall. It has a round compact crown. The trunk is usually clean and straight. It forests the trunk has buttresses. The bark is silvery white with crossways ridges. The leaves are up to 30 cm long. They are dark green and shiny. New leaves are red. The leaf stalk is 2.5-5 cm long and has a furrow along it. The leaves are crowded towards the ends of branches. The leaves are made up of 4-8 pairs of leaflets. They do not have stalks and there is a leaflet at the end. The leaves are 5-10 cm long and 1.3-2.5 cm wide. The end leaflet is broader and narrowed to the base while the side leaflets are slender and slightly curved. The leaves are leathery. Individual leaves turn red before they fall. Trees are separately male and female. The flowers are small and white. They occur at the ends of branches. The fruit is small with thin skin and sweet flesh. They are 2.5 cm long and 1.3 cm wide. They are red when ripe. The sour fruit pulp is edible. It has one large seed. It is in a distinctively pitted stone.

HABITAT

A tropical and subtropical plant. It can stand moderate frosts. It adapts to most soils. It needs reasonably good drainage. The extensive root system can block drains. It can grow in arid places. It grows in Miombo woodland in Africa. It suits hardiness zones 9-11. Wittunga Botanical Gardens. Brisbane Botanical Gardens.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seed. It is best to plant fresh seed. The seeds are removed from the flesh and planted 2 cm deep. Stored seeds should be soaked in warm water for 24 hours before sowing. They germinate in 7-12 days. Plants can be grown from semi-ripe cuttings.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Trees produce fruit in 4-5 years. A fruit weighs about 5 g.

NOTES

There is only one Harpephyllum species.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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PROVIDED BY **Food Plants International**

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