PLANT FACT SHEET

Pouteria campechiana (H. B. Kunth) Baehni

GENUS *Pouteria* **FAMILY** Sapotaceae

COMMON NAMES Egg fruit tree, Canistel

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, seeds, Nuts

The fruit is eaten fresh or made into icecream. The skin and seeds are removed. It is not good cooked but is used instead of pumpkin in pie. It is used in cakes, pies, custards and puddings. It is used in fruit cups, ice cream and milk shakes.
It is often eaten with lemon juice. It can also be eaten with pepper and salt.

DESCRIPTION

A tree up to 8 m high. It can be 30 m high. It is evergreen and has an open crown. The branches are mostly horizontal. The leaves are oval but taper towards both ends. They can be 6-25 cm long by 2.5-8 cm wide. They are shiny and bright green. The leaves are clustered near the ends of the twigs. The leaf stalks can be 5-25 cm long. The small flowers grow in clusters of 2 to 5 on young wood. The flowers have a scent. The fruit is round, slightly pointed at the end, orange yellow and up to 10 cm long. The skin is thin, tough and waxy. The flesh is orange and has a musky smell. The seeds are about 2-3 cm long, dark brown and shiny. There are often 1-3 seeds per fruit.

HABITAT

It is native to C and S America. It is a tropical and subtropical plant. It suits the coast in the tropics and is damaged by frost. It can grow up to 1400 m in the tropics. It will grow on fairly poor soils. It does better on fertile well drained soils. It can tolerate reasonably dry periods. In Brisbane Botanical Gardens. In XTBG Yunnan. It suits hardiness zones 10-11.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Trees are normally grown from seed. Seed need to be planted fresh. Seeds germinate in 2-3 weeks. Seedlings can be planted out after one year. A spacing of 4 m is suitable. It benefits from mulching due to the shallow root system. Plants can also be grafted and grown by air-layering. A spacing of 7-8 m is suitable. Trees should be lightly pruned to give 4-5 well spaced branches.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Seedlings and grafted trees grow quickly. It begins bearing at about 3-5 years old. Grafted trees produce a year or so earlier. Fruit are harvested when they develop their full yellow colour. Fruit should be clipped when mature and ripened at room temperature for 3 to 10 days. Putting a little salt on the end of the fruit stalk hastens ripening. Fruit ripen 5-6 months after flowering.

NOTES

There are about 150-320 Pouteria species. They grow in the tropics.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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French, B.R. & Maynard, A.R. Food Plants International Database. Food Plants International

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