PLANT FACT SHEET

Prosopis juliflora (Sw.) DC.

GENUS *Prosopis* **FAMILY** Fabaceae

COMMON NAMES Honey mesquite

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds, Leaves, Fruit, Pods, Flowers, Flowers - tea, Gum, Vegetable

The sweetish white pulp of the pod is eaten raw.
They are also ground into meal and mixed with water to make a drink. This is drunk immediately but is also allowed to form a pudding or be fermented into beer.
The ripe beans can be soaked overnight and baked with molasses and salt pork.
The flowers can be eaten raw, roasted or made into tea.
The trunks yield a sweet gum used in candy making.

DESCRIPTION

A small tree up to 15- 20 m tall with long cracks in the bark. It is often a smaller tree about 3-5 m high. It is spiny and deciduous. Some kinds have thorns 5 cm long. The young branches are smooth and green. The bark is thick and rough grey-green. The leaves are twice divided. The leaflets are oblong and narrow. They are 1.5 cm long. There is no leaflet at the end. The flowers are golden yellow and crowded into dense spikes. These are 5-10 cm long and have a smell. The fruit is a yellow pod 10-20 cm long. The pod is brittle. It has brown seeds embedded in a whitish pulp. There are 10-20 seeds inside. It is a legume.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows well in arid regions. It can grow on poor, sandy or rocky soil and can grow on salty soils. It grows in the Sahel. It has been introduced and is grown in some coastal areas of Papua New Guinea. It has also become self sown. It grows in areas with an annual rainfall between 150-750 mm. It grows between 600-2,400 m above sea level. It is wind resistant. It can grow in arid places.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It grows from seeds. Seeds are sown directly where they are to grow. Seeds are hard to extract from the pod but this can be done by soaking them in water. Seed are easy to store. They can be stored in the pod. It can also be grown by cuttings and suckers.

Harvesting and Seed Production

The plant is fast growing. It can be lopped, pruned or shaped. Plants set seed after 3-4 years.

NOTES

Also as Mimosaceae.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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