PLANT FACT SHEET

Syzygium cordatum Hochst ex C. Krauss

GENUS *Syzygium* **FAMILY** Myrtaceae

COMMON NAMES Water berry

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Stems - flavouring, Leaves - tea

The fruit is eaten raw. It is also used for drinks and jams.
An alcoholic drink is made from the fruit. Caution: Alcohol is a cause of cancer.
The leaves are used as a seasoning and preservative.

DESCRIPTION

A medium sized evergreen tree. It grows to 8-15 m high. The trunk sometimes has buttresses. The crown of the tree is rounded. The bark is dark brown and rough with cracks along its length. The small branches are angular and the edges of them is winged. The leaves tend to be near the ends of branches and occur in large numbers. They clasp the stem in opposite pairs. The following leaf pair are at right angles. The leaves are leathery and blue-green. They are oblong to circular and 3-8 cm long by 2-8 cm across. The base of the leaf is heart shaped. The edges of the leaves are often wavy. The new leaves are bright red. The flowers occur in dense branched clusters. These can be 10 cm across. They are white or pink and the stamens show up clearly. The flowers contain both sexes. The flowers produce abundant nectar. They are also scented. The fruit is 1.3 cm long. They are purple. The fruit is edible. It has one seed inside.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It occurs in lowland forests always near streams and swamps. It can grow up to 1680 m above sea level in South Africa. In swamps forests it can form a very large fern covered tree while in drier areas is is a much smaller rounded shrub. It grows in areas with an annual rainfall above 500 mm. It can re-grow after fire. It can grow in arid places.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It is grown from fresh seed. The seeds can be in pots for transplanting or sown directly. There are 400-500 seeds per kg. The seeds germinate well and evenly. Most have germinated in 25 days. Seed cannot be dried out and will only remain viable for a day.

Harvesting and Seed Production

The tree is fairly fast growing. It can be cut back and allowed to re-grow. In the southern hemisphere the fruit are ripe November to March. A fruit weighs about 2.5 g.

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