PLANT FACT SHEET

Schinziophyton rautanenii (Schinz) Radcl.-Sm

GENUS *Schinziophyton* **FAMILY** Euphorbiaceae

COMMON NAMES Mongongo nut, Manketti tree

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Nuts, Fruit, Seeds, Seeds - oil, Plant - water

The fresh and dried fruits are eaten. The fruit flesh and the seeds are eaten raw or cooked.
The nuts are also eaten. They are eaten raw, dried, cooked, whole or pounded and mixed with other ingredients to make a variety of dishes.
The fruit is eaten raw or cooked. It is also used to make soup and beer.
The nuts also produce an oil used for cooking.

DESCRIPTION

A large spreading tree. It has a sturdy trunk up to 1 m across. It usually grows 7-9 m tall but can be 24 m tall. The crown is rounded. It has smooth green or golden bark. It has stubby branches. There are reddish-brown furry hairs on the young branches and stalks. These disappear with age. The plant has a cloudy latex. The leaves are produced one after another along the stalk. The leaves are compound and leaflets arranged like fingers on a hand. The leaves have 3-7 leaflets and these are 5-13 cm long and 2.5-9 cm wide. They are velvety grey underneath. The leaf stalks are 15 cm long. The base of the leaflets is unequal. They are dark green on top and paler underneath. The leaves have star shaped hairs in both sides. There are 1-3 flat dark glands where the leaf joins the stalk. It loses its leaves during summer. The male and female flowers on on different plants. The buds are rusty red and velvety and on long furry stalks. The flowers are small and white or yellow. The female flowers are more tightly grouped together than the male flowers. The fruit is egg shaped and 35 mm long by 25 mm wide. They are velvety. When young they are hairy and when mature have a tough brown shell. There is a thick layer of pulp around a very hard and finely pitted stone. Inside this are 2 light coloured kernels. The fruit are edible. The kernel is edible.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows on Kalahari sand. It needs a hot subtropical climate. It grows in deep, well-drained, dry sandy soils. It is often over limestone material. It does well with average temperatures above 20°C and often above 30°C. It will grow with rainfall between 200-1,000 mm per year. It grows at altitudes between 200-1,000 m. It can tolerate frost. It can grow in arid places.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Cultivation has proven difficult. Seed grow more easily if they have passed through an elephant!

Harvesting and Seed Production

Trees take 25 years until fruiting. Fruit are harvested off the ground.

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