PLANT FACT SHEET

Use with caution

This plant can be harmful if it is eaten raw, in large amounts or without the right preparation. Read the whole fact sheet before use.

Aesculus pavia L.

GENUS *Aesculus* **FAMILY** Sapindaceae

COMMON NAMES Red buckeye, Firecracker-plant, Scarlet buckeye

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds, Nut

Seeds are eaten cooked. They can be dried and ground into a powder and used as a porridge.
CAUTION: This plant contains saponins which although poisonous are not normally easily absorbed by the body. It is nevertheless probably no wise to eat large quantities. The saponin can be removed by slow roasting, then crushing and extended washing.

DESCRIPTION

A deciduous shrub. It grows to 5 m high and spreads to 3 m across. It has dense cane like branches. The bark is dark grey and smooth. The leaves have leaflets divided like fingers on a hand. The leaves have 5 leaflets. These have sharp teeth. They can be 15 cm long. They are dark glossy green above and turn red in autumn. The flowers are 4 cm long and deep crimson. They are produced in upright spikes. The fruit is rounded and smooth and brown. It encloses 1 or 2 glossy brown seeds.

HABITAT

It is a temperate plant. They grow naturally in South-eastern North America from Virginia to Florida and west to Louisiana in rich moist soils in deciduous woods. It can grow well in sandy soils. Trees are very shade tolerant but can also grow in sunny positions. It suits hardiness zones 6-10. Arboretum Tasmania.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seed. Fresh seed which has not been allowed to dry out should be used. Seed germinates quickly. Trees transplant fairly easily. Plants can be grown by separating the suckers during the dormant time.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Trees are fast-growing but also short-lived. They can commence flowering when only 1 metre tall.

NOTES

There are 15 Aesculus species.
Also put in the family Hippocastanaceae.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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ONLINE FACT SHEET https://www.echocommunity.org/en/resources/8d633dcf-64f9-4a80-95b1-2b5dd890df80