PLANT FACT SHEET

Vangueria madagascariensis J. F. Gmel.

GENUS *Vangueria* **FAMILY** Rubiaceae

COMMON NAMES Spanish tamarind, Smooth wild-medlar

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit

The ripe fruit can be eaten raw or stewed.
Unripe fruit have a texture like an apple and very ripe shrivelled fruit taste like tamarind.
The fruit are especially enjoyed by children.

DESCRIPTION

A deciduous tree. It often has several stems. It can grow to 15 m high. The bark is pale grey and fairly smooth. It loses its leaves during the year. The leaves are pale green and attractive. They are oval and 8-20 cm long by 12 cm wide and rounded at the base. They are shiny and limp. Leaf stalks are up to 1 cm long. There are leaf stipules on the young shoots. The flowers are greenish white in clusters in the axils of leaves. These are 8 cm long. The flowers are yellow green and 8 mm long. They are small and few. The petals are pale green. Fruit are round, smooth and green with white dots. They are about 4-5 cm across. Often fruit are in bunches of 5-6. Fruit contain 4 or more seeds. The seeds are 1-2 cm long. The fruit are edible.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows in the lowlands. They suit a range of soil types. They have good drought tolerance. It grows in scrub and on the edges of forests. The grow naturally in dry forest edges. They grow from sea level to 2,130 m altitude. It grows in areas with rainfall from 600 to 1200 mm annually. Temperatures are in the range 17°C to 29°C. The plant needs to be in an open sunny position. It can re-grow after fire. It cannot tolerate frost.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

They can be grown from seed or cuttings. Seed can be sown direct or in pots then transplanted. Soaking seed in cold water overnight may help germination. Trees can be cut back and re-grow.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Trees grow rapidly. Because the fruit persist on the tree fruit need to be picked. Plants flower between October and January. It takes about 6-8 months from flower fertilisation to fruit ripening.

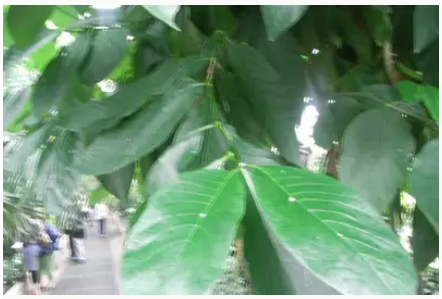
NOTES

The fruit are rich in Vitamin C.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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