PLANT FACT SHEET

Heritiera littoralis Dryander ex Aiton

GENUS *Heritiera* **FAMILY** Malvaceae

COMMON NAMES Looking Glass Mangrove

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Seeds, Nuts, Leaves - tea

The seeds are eaten after roasting the fruit. They are bitter.
The seeds are sometimes eaten with fish.
The leaves are used in the preparation of tea.

DESCRIPTION

A tree up to 30 m high with a silvery crown and wide spreading branch-like buttresses. The trunk can be 90 cm across. The bark is light coloured and coarsely furrowed. The leaves are grouped near the ends of branches and are dark green on top and with silvery scales underneath. The leaves are 14-29 cm long. The upper side of the leaves is smooth and without hairs while the under side is silvery. The flowering branches are borne in the axils of leaves and have many flowers. The flowers are small, and hang in tassels. The flowers are of one sex, yellowish green and bell shaped. The fruit are hard, woody, smooth and shiny and boat shaped. The fruit are in clusters near the ends of branches. Fruit are 5-10 cm long. There is one seed inside which is edible. The wood is very hard.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. They are found in the inner part of the mangrove swamp and sometimes on dry land just at the back of the swamp in the tropics. They grow on sandy and rocky coasts. It can tolerate salt. They occur up to 50 m altitude. The trees occur from tropical Africa, India through Malaysia to Polynesia. It can grow in arid places. In Townsville palmetum.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. Trees grow wild. The fruit can float in sea water for long distances and then still germinate.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Trees are slow growing. In the southern hemisphere flowering and fruiting is from April to November.

NOTES

The seeds are used in medicine in Indonesia. There are about 35 Heritiera species.
Also put in the family Sterculiaceae.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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