PLANT FACT SHEET

Canarium australianum var. glabrum F.Muell., Leenh.

GENUS *Canarium* **FAMILY** Burseraceae

COMMON NAMES Melville Island White Beech

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: seeds, Nuts

The seeds are eaten.
The ripe fruit is eaten after cooking (roasting).
The seeds are eaten especially by children.

DESCRIPTION

A deciduous tree. It loses its leaves in the dry season. It grows to 12-25 m high and spreads to 3 m wide. The stems are erect and branching. They branches have leaf scars on them. The bark is smooth and slightly scaly. It is cream-grey. The leaves are compound and alternate. The whole leaf is 30 cm long. There are 4-7 pairs of oval leaflets and a leaflet at the end. These are 7-16 cm long by 4-7 cm wide. Leaves are dark green and smooth on top and paler and sometimes slightly hairy underneath. The veins are distinct. The edges of the leaves are finely toothed on younger leaves. The leaf stalk is 5-15 cm long. Trees are separately male and female. The flowers are like tubes and occur in clusters in the axils of leaves near the ends of branches. The flowers are small and creamy white and 0.3-0.7 cm long. The flower cluster may be 25 cm long. Male clusters are larger and more open than female clusters. The fruit are oval fleshy fruit with a hard stone inside. They are 2.5 cm long by 1.5 cm wide. They are blue-black when ripe. Inside there is a hard brown one seeded nut. The seed is 1.5 cm long.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows on light to medium, well drained soils. It prefers an open sunny position. It is drought and frost tender. It is most common in open forest and near the sea on sand dunes.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. Seeds do not all germinate at the same time. This can be improved by filing to break the hard seed coat. Trees can be propagated by aerial layering. Grafting may also be possible.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Young trees grow rapidly. In Australia trees flower September to December and fruit April to October. Flowering and fruiting time varies with location.

NOTES

There are 80-95 Canarium species.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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