PLANT FACT SHEET

Erythrina edulis Triana ex M. Micheli

GENUS *Erythrina* **FAMILY** Fabaceae

COMMON NAMES Andean tree bean

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds, Fruit

The beans are boiled (for 45 minutes or more) and eaten with corn, cassava, bread or potatoes.
They are also mashed with cheese, and fried.
Caution: The uncooked seeds can be poisonous if eaten often.

DESCRIPTION

A leafy tree. It grows 14 m tall. The crown can be 7 m across. The trunk can be 37 cm across. The stem and branches have stout prickles. The leaves are alternate and have 3 leaflets. They have long leaf stalks and 2 nectar producing glands at the base of each leaflet. The flowers are in large clusters on a stout stalk. The flowers are red. The fruit hang in bunches of 9-18. They are cylinder shaped pods. The pods can be 32 cm long by 3 cm wide. They have 6 seeds. The seeds are large and succulent.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. In the Andes it grows between 2,000-2,800 m altitude. It can be down to 500 m above sea level. It grows in dry and moist tropics. It can be in areas with a temperature range between 5-25°C and a rainfall of 450-1,800 mm. It is best in a sunny position in a loose textured soil. It cannot tolerate soils with a pH below 4.5.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seed. Seeds grow rapidly. They are also grown from cuttings. It can be used as a hedge.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Seedlings grow rapidly and can fruit after 2 years. Trees last for 30-40 years. Seeds mature about 3 months after flowering.

NOTES

There are 108 Erythrina species.
They are rich in protein.

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