PLANT FACT SHEET

Acacia microbotrya Benth.

GENUS *Acacia* **FAMILY** Fabaceae

COMMON NAMES Manna wattle, Gum Wattle

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds, Gum

The seeds are pounded to make flour which is cooked in dampers. The gum is sweet and edible.

DESCRIPTION

A small evergreen tree 2-6 m tall. It can be up to 5 m wide. The bark is rough at the base but otherwise the stem is erect and smooth. The branches are slightly angular. The leaves (phyllodes) are green-grey and hang down. They are curved. The leaves vary a lot in shape and size. They are mostly 7-13 cm long by 0.6-1.5 cm wide. They taper towards the end. The flowers are small bright yellow sprays. They look like small bunches of grapes. About 20 small flowers with stalks 3-4 mm long occur as a ball. About 3-25 of these heads are on a branched stalk. The pods are dark brown and with fine veins. They are 10-20 cm long by 0.2-0.7 cm wide. The pods are constricted between the seeds. The pods have slightly thickened edges. The seeds are black. They are oblong and 5-7 mm long by 3-4 mm wide.

HABITAT

It is a temperate plant. A native of south west Western Australia. It occurs in sandy loams. It needs well drained sites. It prefers open sunny positions. It is drought resistant. It could be damaged by frost.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It is grown from seed. The seed need treatment to break the hard seed coat. Normally this is by putting the seeds in very hot water and letting the water cool down overnight then planting the seeds immediately.

Harvesting and Seed Production

It is fast growing in warmer areas. The tree produces large quantities of edible gum in dry seasons. It can be stored for later use. The tree flowers in April to September. It does best with a rainfall over 38 mm.

NOTES

There are about 1,350 Acacia species. Over 1,000 occur in Australia. Also as Mimosaceae.

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