PLANT FACT SHEET

Nephelium lappaceum L.

GENUS *Nephelium* **FAMILY** Sapindaceae

COMMON NAMES Rambutan

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Seeds

The fruit are eaten fresh. More sour fruit are eaten stewed.
The seeds are sometimes roasted and eaten.
The seed can be used for oil.
Fruit are available in cans and frozen.

DESCRIPTION

A medium sized tree up to 12-25 m high. It keeps its leaves throughout the year. Trees spread to 6 m wide. The leaves are alternate with leaflets opposite along the stalk. There are 5-7 pairs of leaflets. Each leaflet can be 20 cm long by 8 cm wide. The leaflet stalks are short and the leaflets are pointed at the tip and rounded at the base. The flowers are very numerous on compound flower arrangements. Seedling trees can produce only female or only male trees. Some kinds have both male and female flowers or both flower parts in the one flower. The fruit are dark red with many prominent projections united at the base. The colour can vary between yellow, green, orange and bright red. Sometimes trees are separately male and female and sometimes seedless fruit is set. Often male and female flowers are separate but on the same tree. The fruit hang in loose clusters of 10-12 and are up to 5 cm long. Normally each fruit contains one large seed. There are several named cultivated varieties.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It suits the humid tropical lowlands. It is native to Malaysia. It requires a moist hot climate mostly within 12° of the equator. They extend from sea level up to altitudes of about 500 m in equatorial zones and will grow about 17° from the equator. They do best where the temperature is constant around 28°C or range from 22-30°C and rainfall of 2000 to 5000 mm per year. Low humidity can cause scorching of leaves. Excessive rainfall before flower formation reduces flowering. A dry period of about one month assists flower initiation and areas with two seasonal dry periods can get double crops. A well drained soil is needed. It is best with a pH between 4.5-6.5. In XTBG Yunnan. It suits hardiness zones 11-12.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Trees can be grown from fresh seeds. The seeds are short lived so need to be planted fresh, after washing. Germination takes place in 7-10 days. Seedlings are not easy to transplant. Roots are very sensitive to drying out. Selected trees can be propagated by budding, grafting or air-layering. Seedling trees vary considerably in

quality due to cross pollination. Trees are planted 10 m apart. Planting densities of 80-120 trees per hectare occur. About 1% male flowers are sufficient if enough pollinating insects are present. Some kinds need to have varieties mixed in the garden to get good fruit set. Twice yearly applications of organic manure are often used.

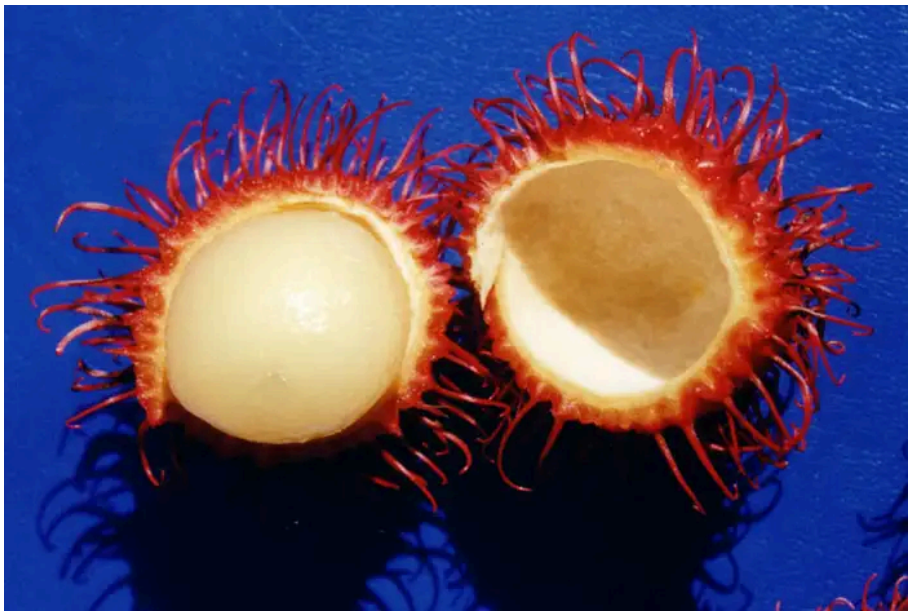
Harvesting and Seed Production

Seedling trees can start to bear after 6 years and vegetative trees after 4 years. Fruiting is seasonal. Flowering occurs during the dry season. The main fruit season is November to March. Fruit mature about 110 days after flowering. Where trees with only female flowers occur, male pollinator trees are needed. Fruit can weigh 20 to 40 g each. Fruit need to be harvested when ripe. A well maintained tree can produce 150 kg of fruit.

NOTES

Demo

PICTURES



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