PLANT FACT SHEET

Pimenta dioica (L.) Merr.

GENUS *Pimenta* **FAMILY** Myrtaceae

COMMON NAMES Allspice Tree, Pimento

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Seeds, Leaves, Spice, Herb, Leaves - tea

The dry seeds are used to flavour food. The unripe fruit are dried quickly to produce allspice.
The fruit contain an oil used in flavouring.
It is used to flavour meat dishes, pickles, sauces, and stuffings. It can be used in vegetable dishes.
The leaves can be used as a condiment. They can also be used for tea.

DESCRIPTION

A medium sized tree. It grows 13-15 m tall. It keeps its leaves throughout the year. The bark is silver grey and has an aroma. It peels off in long strips. The wood is hard, durable and close grained. The leaves are dark green, shiny and leathery. They are grouped in clusters at the ends of the secondary branches. The flowers are small and white. The fruit are purple berries. They can be 6.5 cm across. These contain 1 or 2 large seeds. These are the allspice of commerce. Leaves and bark also have the allspice scent. When in flower the trees have a smell or allspice.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It is native to tropical America. It suits humid, lowland woodland and savannah. It can tolerate heat and drought. Mature trees can withstand light frost. It is often on well-drained limestone soils up to 1,000 m above sea level. It suits hardiness zones 10-12.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are mostly grown from seed. Seed loose their viability quickly. It can also be grown by grafting.

Harvesting and Seed Production

The tree takes 20 year to beging fruiting. The small twigs carrying the berries are cut with clippers. These are dried and cured. They are dried to 10-12% moisture to protect against mould. The red berries are sun dried and become brown. The berry is 3-6 mm across.

NOTES

There are about 15 Pimenta species. They grow in tropical America.

PICTURES

Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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