PLANT FACT SHEET

Ochna pulchra Hook.

GENUS *Ochna* **FAMILY** Ochnaceae

COMMON NAMES Peeling-bark ochna, Peeling plane

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: fruit, Seeds - oil

The green fruit are roasted and eaten but the seeds are poisonous.
Ripe fruit are boiled in water to release fat which is edible.
The seeds have been reported as being eaten in Zambia. The seeds are dried and boiled and the oil skimmed off.

DESCRIPTION

A small or medium sized tree. It grows 3-8 m high. It has a spreading crown. The trunk can be 15-20 cm across. The trunk is often white with grey peeling bark. The young branches and shoots are white. The tree loses its leaves during the year. The leaves are simple and alternate. They are 3-10 cm long and 2-5 cm wide. They are wide and sword shaped. They are yellow-green and with easy to see veins. The leaf stalks are short and thick. The flowers are yellow. They have a sweet smell. They occur as many together in arrangements up to 13 cm long. The fruit are usually 3 kidney shaped carpels. Each is 1.4 cm long. They are black when mature.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows in open bushland. It is often on sandy soil. It can grow in arid places. In Zimbabwe it grows between 1,000-1,560 m above sea level. It suits hardiness zones 9-10.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Seeds germinate poorly. Young plants are hard to transplant. Fresh seed planted where they are to grow is the best. The roots are only shallow.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Fruit take 1 month to ripen. One tree can yield 7 kg of fruit. 10 tons of fruit would yield about 3 tons of oil.

NOTES

There are 90 Ochna species.

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