PLANT FACT SHEET

Erythrina vespertilio Benth.

GENUS *Erythrina* **FAMILY** Fabaceae

COMMON NAMES Bat's Wing Coral Tree, Grey Corkwood

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Root

The roots are eaten after roasting.

DESCRIPTION

A deciduous tree. It grows to 15-30 m high and spreads to 5 m across. The stem is erect and stout. The trunk can be 25-90 cm across. It tends to be a slender tree. The bark is rough and has prickles. The small branches are thorny. The leaves have 3 leaflets. The leaflets are broadly wedge shaped at the base. The leaflets are 7-12 cm long and 5-12 cm wide. They are divided into 2 lobes. The leaves vary a lot in shape but are often like a bat in flight. The flowers are pea shaped and red. They are 4 cm long. They occur in loose clusters 5-25 cm long. These occur on the ends of branches. The fruit are pods 6-12 cm long by 1.5 cm wide. They are uneven and black. They contain 2-8 seeds. The seeds are about 1.2 cm long. They are red or orange and glossy.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It prefers light to medium soils. The soil needs to be well drained but can be of poor fertility. It needs an open sunny position. It can withstand drought and frost. Often they grow near the edges of rainforests but can also occur in dry open country. Plants do not suit cool, misty or humid conditions. It can grow in arid places. It suits hardiness zones 10-12.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. The seed need to be treated to break the hard seed coat. Cuttings can be grafted onto seedling plants. Young trees transplant easily when leafless.

NOTES

There are 108 Erythrina species.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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