PLANT FACT SHEET

Syzygium guineense (Willd.) DC.

GENUS *Syzygium* **FAMILY** Myrtaceae

COMMON NAMES Water berry, Water pear, Woodland waterberry

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Bark - tea, Seeds, Roots

The ripe fruit is eaten raw. They are also used for drinks. They are used in relishes and chutneys.
The bark is used for tea.
The roots are eaten.

DESCRIPTION

It is a medium sized evergreen tree. It grows 15-30 m tall. This tree varies a lot. The trunk is broad and fluted. The bark is rough, greyish white and flaky. It produces a red watery sap if cut. The young branches are four sided. The branches tend to hang over. The leaves are simple and opposite one another along the stem. They are shiny, dark green and leathery. Underneath the leaves is paler green. Young leaves are purple red. Leaves are 5-16 cm long by 1.3-7 cm across. The leaf stalk is about 1 cm long. The leaves do not have as many side veins as Syzygium gerrardii. The flowers are white. They have a honey sweet scent. The flowers occur in clusters at the ends of branches. Clusters can be 10 cm across. The fruit are oval and 2-3 cm long. They are whitish green when young and turn dark purple when ripe. Clumps of 20-30 fruit occur together. The fruit contains one large seed. The seed is 1.4 cm across. The fruit is edible. There are about 10 subspecies.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It occurs in most of Africa. It grows from sea level to 1350 m in Tanzania and up to 2,100 m in Uganda. It requires plenty of water. It grows in areas with annual rainfalls of 743 mm to 2340 mm but in the drier areas relies on underground water. It occurs in areas with temperatures between 16°C and 30°C. It grows on a range of soils. It commonly occurs in rainforest or swamp forest. It suits humid locations. Seedlings need adequate light. It can grow in arid places.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from fresh seed. Seed need to be sown within 24 hours. Seed germination is good and seeds grow within 25 days. Seeds can be sown into pots then relocated into the field. (There are 2,400 - 3,700 seeds per kg.)

Harvesting and Seed Production

Flowering is April to August (October to November) in the southern hemisphere. Fruit are mostly ripe from February to May. Sometimes flowering occurs twice where there are two seasonal fluctuations of rainfall. Fresh fruit cannot be stored for long.

NOTES

Syzygium guineense var littorale and Syzygium guineense var. macrocarpum have edible fruit but Syzygium guineense var. guineense does not.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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