PLANT FACT SHEET

Coffea liberica Bull. ex Heirn.

GENUS *Coffea* **FAMILY** Rubiaceae

COMMON NAMES Coffee (Liberian)

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds - coffee

The seeds make a bitter drink. They are roasted.

DESCRIPTION

An evergreen tree up to 17 m high. There are two kinds of branches, those which grow upwards and those which grow sideways, bearing fruit. The leaves are large and leathery. They are oblong and 15-30 cm long by 5-15 cm wide. They taper to a short tip and the base is wedge shaped. There are 7-10 pairs of side veins. The leaf stalk is stout and 1-2 cm long. The flower cluster is in the axils of leaves. There are usually 1-3 flower clusters in each axil, with 1-4 flowers in each. The flowers are white, star like, and have a scent. The fruit are oval and 2-3 cm long by 2-2.5 cm wide. They are streaked red when ripe, and mature black. The mature seeds are up to 1.5 cm long.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It suits the hot, wet, lowland tropics. It requires heavy rainfall and high temperatures. It benefits from light shade. It can grow on a range of soils, including poor soils. It can grow in temperatures between 18-28°C. It cannot tolerate frost. It grows naturally in Liberia in West Africa. It grows up to 1,200 m above sea level. In Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. Seed breed fairly true. The seed are put in a nursery and planted out at 4 m x 4 m spacing. Trees are often not pruned. Sometimes the plants are topped at 2 m and excessive side branches removed. Usually fruit are dried on the tree and processed by dry methods. The seeds have a hard shell making it more difficult to remove than Arabican coffee. Plants can also be grown from cuttings or by grafting.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Flowering occurs at irregular intervals but not in flushes. Fruit mature one year after flowering. Fruit of various stages of ripeness are found on the one tree. Plants are cross pollinated.

NOTES

There are about 40 Coffea species.

PICTURES

Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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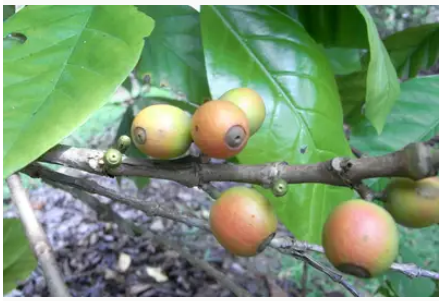

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French, B.R. & Maynard, A.R. Food Plants International Database. Food Plants International

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