PLANT FACT SHEET

Synsepalum dulcificum (Schumach. & Thonn.) Daniell

GENUS *Synsepalum* **FAMILY** Sapotaceae

COMMON NAMES Sweet berry, Miracle fruit

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit

The fruit itself is not sweet but after eating this fruit, sour fruit taste sweet. (This effect lasts for 30 minutes.)
The berries are eaten fresh.
The fruit is used to sweeten sour palm wine and fermented maize bread.
The fruit can be eaten with others foods to counter sour or bitter flavours.

DESCRIPTION

An evergreen bush. It grows to 6 m high in the humid tropics. The leaves are dark green and elongated. Forms with different leaf types are known. The leaves are alternate. The leaves are simple and entire and clustered near the tips of branches. The leaf blade can be 5-10 cm long by 1.5-4 cm wide. There are 8 pairs of side veins. The flowers are small (0.1 cm) and white. The fruit is a small bright red berry 2-3 cm long. It contains a single seed. The seed is large and the flesh is yellow. The fruit is edible but tasteless. It has an interesting side effect of making following foods taste sweet.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It cannot tolerate frost. Young plants are killed by frost while older plants may survive light frosts. It requires good sunlight. It must grow in acid soil. A pH of 4.5 to 5.8 is suitable. The soil needs to be well drained. It requires humid conditions. Plenty of regular watering is required. It grows naturally in tropical West Africa. In XTBG Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It can be grown from seed or by using cuttings. Seed cannot be stored but need to be sown fresh from the fruit. Seeds need to be in a rich well drained soil. They should only be sown shallowly. Seeds germinate in 8-10 weeks. Seedlings grow very slowly in the first year. Cuttings only root slowly and are slow to establish.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Plants grow slowly. Trees take about 4 years to start producing fruit. Flowers occur in flushes in several months of the year. Large numbers of fruit are produced.

NOTES

There are about 8 Synsepalum species. It contains the sweetener miraculin.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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