



PLANT FACT SHEET

Guazuma ulmifolia Lamk.

GENUS *Guazuma* FAMILY Malvaceae

COMMON NAMES West Indian elm

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Bark - drink, Flowers, Seeds, Gum

The ripe fruit capsule is eaten. The fruit is rich in mucilage.

The green fruits are eaten raw, cooked, crushed in water to make a drink or used to flavour other foods.

The sap is used to clarify syrup in the making of sugar.

DESCRIPTION

A tall tree. It loses its leaves during the year. The bark is grey-brown and rough and cracked. The tree grows 12-20 m high. The crown is irregular and the branches droop. The leaves are 6-20 cm long and are unequal at the base. Leaves are hairy and have irregular teeth. The flowers occur in clusters. They are about 5 mm wide and yellow. They have 5 petals and a woolly appearance. There are thread like appendages at the top of the flowers. The fruit is a capsule which is round and green but turns black when ripe. The fruit is edible. There are several oval seeds in a sweet, edible, mucilage layer.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It is native to tropical America. It will grow on poor soils. It grows from sea level to 1,200 m in the tropics. It grows in areas with an annual rainfall below 1,200 mm. It can grow in arid places. Madras. At ECHO.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. It is considered that seeds which have passed through an animals digestive tract grow more easily. Seeds are soaked in water at 90°C for 4 minutes then in cool water for 24 hours. Seedlings can be transplanted after 7 months. It can be grown from cuttings.

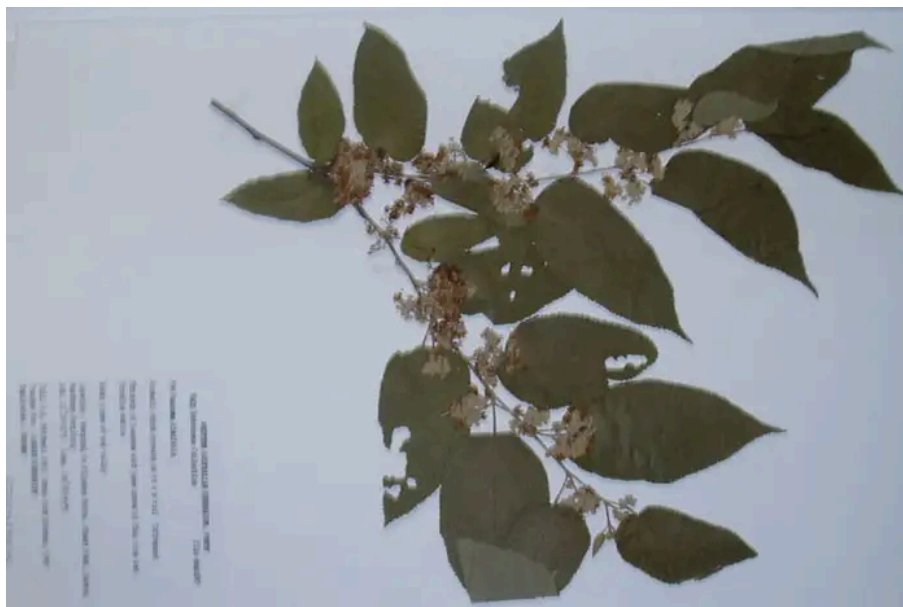
Harvesting and Seed Production

It is fast growing. The fruit remain on the tree for long periods.

NOTES

There are 4 *Guazuma* species in tropical America. Parts of the tree are used in medicine. Also put in the family Sterculiaceae.

PICTURES



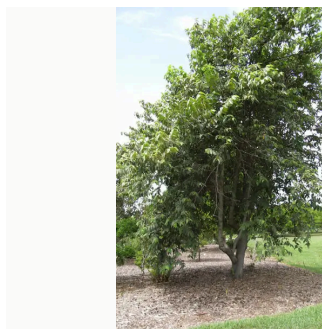
Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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