PLANT FACT SHEET

Shorea robusta C. F. Gaertn.

GENUS *Shorea* **FAMILY** Dipterocarpaceae

COMMON NAMES Sal

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds, Seeds - oil, Fruit, Flowers, Leaves

Roasted seeds are eaten. They are dried and ground into flour and then dried again and used for bread or with other ingredients like salt added.
The seed oil remains solid at room temperature and after processing can substitute for Cocoa butter in the Chocolate industry.
The fruit are occasionally eaten.
CAUTION: The prolonged cooking and drying suggest some toxic substance needs to be removed. They contain tannins or phlobaphene.
The flowers are used in curries.

DESCRIPTION

A tree. It loses some of its leaves during the year. It grows about 50 m high. The bark is rough and reddish brown with deep wide cracks along its length. The leaves have stalks. The stalks are 2-5 cm long. The leaves are 10-20 cm long by 5-13 cm wide. They are oval and leathery. They taper to the tip. They are shiny when mature. The base is rounded or heart shaped. The flowers are yellow. They are in open flower arrangements in the axils of leaves or at the ends of branches. The flowers are small but in large numbers. The fruit is oval. It is 10-15 cm across. It is pale yellowish or green in colour. It is hairy with wing-like sepals at the base. It does not split open. It is one seeded with 5 unequal wings. The seed is oval with fleshy green seed leaves. These contain fatty oil.

HABITAT

It is a subtropical plant. In Nepal plants grow to about 1400 m altitude. It grows on the outer ridges of hills. It suits hardiness zones 10-12.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed.

Harvesting and Seed Production

In Sikkim seeds are available May to June.

NOTES

Chemical composition: Water = 10.8%. Protein = 8%. Carbohydrate = 62.7%. Oil = 14.8%. Fibre = 1.4%. Ash = 2.3%. Sal butter, used in cooking, is derived from the seeds.

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