PLANT FACT SHEET

Erythrina fusca Lour.

GENUS *Erythrina* **FAMILY** Fabaceae

COMMON NAMES Purple coral tree, Swamp coral tree

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Flowers, Vegetable, Leaves - tea, Flowers - tea

The young leaves and shoots are eaten raw in salads, or cooked in stews and other dishes.
They are also used for making tea.

DESCRIPTION

An evergreen tree. It grows to 5-26 m high and spreads to 3 m across. Trees can lose their leaves. The stem is erect and sturdy and has prickles along it. The trunk branches and forks and can be crooked. It can have buttresses. The bark is grey or green and is cracked and flaky. The leaves have 3 leaflets. They are yellowish green on top and with a bluish green bloom underneath. They are thick and oval and 2.5-15 cm long by 1.4-15 cm wide. The leaf stalks are 1-19 cm long have prickles. The flowers are pea shaped and scarlet. They occur in large branching sprays at the ends of branches. This flower spray stalk is 8-13 cm long with flower stalks 3-13 cm long. The flower standard is bright orange-red. It is 4-7 cm long and 4-6 cm wide. The fruit are pods which have stalks. The pods are 14-33 cm long and 1.4-1.8 cm wide. There are 6-12 seeds in a pod. The pod is slightly constricted between the seeds. They are densely velvety. The seeds are dark brown and oblong. They are 1.2-1.8 cm long by 5-8 mm wide.

HABITAT

It is a tropical tree. It prefers rich, moist, well drained soils. It suits a protected sunny position. It is damaged by drought and frost. It grows in tropical lowland swamp forest. Often it is along the edges of rivers. In Papua New Guinea it occurs between 30-135 m and 1600-2000 m altitude.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. They can also be grown by cuttings.

NOTES

There are 108 Erythrina species.

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