PLANT FACT SHEET

Pouteria sapota (Jacq.) Moore & Stearn.

GENUS *Pouteria* **FAMILY** Sapotaceae

COMMON NAMES Sapote, Mamey sapote

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, seeds, Nuts

The fruit is eaten fresh and raw or in icecream and desserts. Fruit are also dried or preserved. It is added to guava cheese and made into jam.
Unripe fruit are used as a vegetable.
The seeds are ground and made into a confection or a drink.

DESCRIPTION

A large tree. It grows 20-45 m tall. The trunk can be 1 m across. There can be buttresses. The branches are thick. There is a dense covering of leaves. The leaves are oval or sword shaped. They are towards the ends of the branches. They are arranged in spirals. The leaf stalk is 2-5 cm long. The leaf blade is 10-30 cm long by 4-10 cm wide. The flowers are small and almost without stalks. They grow in large numbers under branches and along leafless branches. They are in clusters of 6-15 in the axils of fallen leaves. Each flower has 5 true and 5 false stamens. The fruit is large and reddish brown. It has a rough, hard skin. The fruit can be 8-25 cm long. The flesh can be red, orange or greyish. Many varieties occur. They can be long or rounded. The amount of fibre in the flesh varies. The fruit contain one or more seeds. The seeds are large and have a sharp end. They are dark brown and smooth and shiny on one end.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It is native from Mexico to Central America. It does best in the hot humid tropical lowlands. It prefers a rainfall above 1900 mm per year. They are susceptible to frost. It cannot tolerate low temperatures. Temperatures between 25°-28°C are best. They cannot tolerate drought. It grows naturally at low elevations in Central America. Trees grow from sea level to 1400 m altitude. A distinct dry season limits the fruiting season. It suits hardiness zones 10-11. At ECHO.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Trees can be grown from fresh seed. Seeds take 40-70 days to germinate. This can be made quicker by breaking the seed coat. The best varieties are grafted. Shoots for grafting are best selected during the summer dormant period when the tree has no leaves. Plants can be grown by layering.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Trees are slow growing. Grafted trees may bear in 1-4 years. Seedling trees take 8-10 years to fruit. Trees can continue to produce fruit for 100 years. Fruit take about 1 year to mature. A fruit can weigh 2.5 kg.

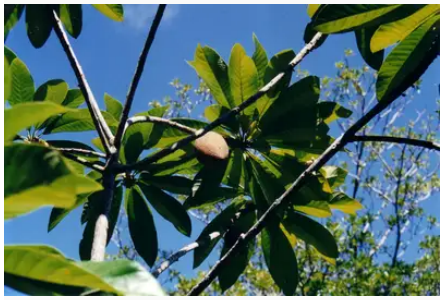
NOTES

There are about 150-320 Pouteria species. They grow in the tropics.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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