PLANT FACT SHEET

# *Madhuca longifolia var. latifolia* (Koen.) MacBride, (Roxb.) Chevalier

**GENUS** *Madhuca* **FAMILY** Sapotaceae

**COMMON NAMES** Mowra buttertree, Honey tree

## EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

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

The fruit are eaten ripe or unripe. The mature fruit are cooked and eaten as a vegetable. The unripe fruit are used for pickles and chutney.
The flowers are eaten raw of sun dried. The flowers are rich in honey and are used to flavour food.
The seeds yield mahua butter used in cooking.
The seeds yield oil and it is a substitute for ghi.

## DESCRIPTION

A large deciduous tree. It grows 15 m tall. The trunk is gnarled. The bark is grey brown and rough. It becomes lightly cracked. The tree has a milky sap. The crown is spreading. The leaves are firm and 13-25 cm long. They are broadly oval with a pointy tip. The leaves are clustered near the ends of the small branches. They turn yellow before they fall. New leaves are pink. The flowers are creamy-white. They are in dense clusters near the ends of the twigs. The flowers are on short stalks about 3 cm long. The petals form a long tube and 15 mm long. The flowers are sweet and edible. The fruit is olive shaped and fleshy. It is 2-5 cm long and orange when ripe.

## HABITAT

It is a subtropical plant. It grows on stony ground. It grows in dry deciduous forest. It is drought hardy but does best with a rainfall of 500-1500 mm per year. It is sensitive to frost when young.

## PRODUCTION

### Harvesting and Seed Production

It is a long lived tree. A large tree can produce 300 kg of flowers in a season. The flowers fall at night and are collected and dried. In north India plants plants flower in March to July.

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French, B.R. & Maynard, A.R. Food Plants International Database. Food Plants International

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