PLANT FACT SHEET

Prunus dulcis var. amygdalus Batsch

GENUS *Prunus* **FAMILY** Rosaceae

COMMON NAMES Almond

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Nuts, Flavouring

The kernels of the nuts are eaten.

DESCRIPTION

A small tree. It grows 5-7 m tall. Leaves are narrower than those of peach but long and toothed around the edge. Flowers can be 5 cm across and are slightly pink. Leaves are folded in the bud. The fruit is green and leathery. The edible kernel is in a hard shell covered with a downy covering.

HABITAT

It needs reasonable soil drainage. It is suited to areas with a long, hot dry summer. In India it grows in cool areas in Kashmir. The area needs to be free of frosts and hail in the spring. In India they grow between 700-2,300 m altitude. Some varieties have lower chilling requirements.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Seeds grow more quickly if chilled in a fridge for 2 weeks then planted in warm damp sand (26°C). Trees often need to be pollinated by another kind of almond. A spacing of 6-7 m is used and a pollinator variety used every 3 rows. Bees assist in pollination. Usually trees are trained to have 3-4 branches around a central leader. Fruit are produced on 5 year old spurs and these spurs can remain fruitful for 5-6 years.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Trees commence fruiting after 3-4 years. Trees can live for 50 years on their own rootstock. Almonds are ready for picking when the fruit change from green to yellow. Yields of up to 600-750 kg of nuts per hectare are achieved.

NOTES

There are about 200 Prunus species. Prunus dulcis is the correct name for sweet almond.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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

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