PLANT FACT SHEET

Maclura tricuspidata (Carrière.) Bur. ex Lav.

GENUS *Maclura* **FAMILY** Moraceae

COMMON NAMES Che, Chinese Che, Chinese Mulberry, Cudrang, Mandarin Melon Berry, Silkworm thorn, Tuo, Zheshu, Zhe tree

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Leaves

The fruit are eaten fresh or cooked.
They are used for juice after the seeds are strained out.

DESCRIPTION

A tree which loses its leaves seasonally. It grows up to 8 m high. It is a broad spreading tree. The bark is greyish brown. The young branches are slightly ridged. Young trees and branches have thorns but these fall off. They are 5-20 mm long. The leaves are carried one after another along the branch. The leaves are like mulberry leaves. Often leaves have three lobes with the central love the largest, but leaf shape can vary. The winter buds are reddish brown. Male and female flowers occur on different plants. Female trees are larger than male trees. The flowers are green and pea-sized. Male flowers are 0.5 cm across. Female flowers are 1-1.5 cm across. Pollen is carried by wind. Fruit are somewhat like a mulberry and litchi. The fruit are 1-2.5 cm across and orange-red when ripe. The flesh is juicy and red with 3-6 small brown seeds. In colder places the leaves drop before fruit are ripe. The fruit is edible.

HABITAT

Plants can grow in quite poor soils. They are tolerant of drought. They can withstand temperatures down to -6°C. They need a warm sunny position. They can withstand wind. They do best with a well drained soil. In China they grow on sunny forest margins and mountain slopes between 500-2200 m altitude. It suits hardiness zones 6-9.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seed but these may take 10 years to bear. Seed should be sown fresh from the fruit. Plants can also b grown from softwood cuttings and rooting hormone used. Plants can also be grafted. A male and female plant can be planted together and pruned as one bush with 25% male and 75% female branches. Pruning is done regularly. The previous years growth is pruned to half its length.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Up to 150 kg of fruit per tree is possible. Fruit are not easily picked off the tree. Fruit should be fully ripe for best flavour. This means they are dark red to black.

NOTES

The leaves are used for silk worm.

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