PLANT FACT SHEET

Averrhoa bilimbi L.

GENUS *Averrhoa* **FAMILY** Oxalidaceae

COMMON NAMES Bilimbi

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Flowers, Spice

The fruit are used for souring dishes.
They can also be used for jams, drinks, pickles and in curries.
The flowers can be made into conserves.

DESCRIPTION

A small evergreen tree up to 7-10 m high. It can spread 3 m across. The stem is erect and short. Leaves are large. Leaves have from 5 to 17 or 34 pairs of leaflets. Leaves are pale green. The leaves are often clustered near the branch tips. Flowers are crimson. They are produced on old branches and the stem. The flowers are in 15 cm long clusters. These then bear clusters of cucumber shaped fruit on the trunk and older branches. Fruit are 8-10 cm long and yellow or green. They are soft and fleshy with a few flat seeds in the centre. Fruit are sour but edible.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It suits the hot, wet tropical lowlands. The tree is drought resistant. It will grow from sea level up to at least 750 m altitude in the tropics. It prefers well composted, moist soil, in a protected, partly shaded position. It is frost tender. In the Cairns Botanical Gardens. It suits hardiness zones 10-12. At MARDI.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Trees are mostly grown from seeds. It grows wild in secondary forest in many coastal areas. It can also be grown by air layering.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Flowers are produced all year round. Flowering is more common in dry seasons. Plants produce fruit after 5-6 years/ Fruit mature in 90 years. A tree can produce 500 fruit in a year.

NOTES

There are 5 Averrhoa species. Sometimes Averrhoa are put in the Averrhoaceae family.

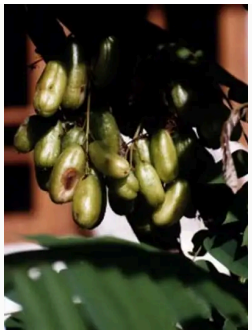
PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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