PLANT FACT SHEET

Use with caution

This plant can be harmful if it is eaten raw, in large amounts or without the right preparation. Read the whole fact sheet before use.

Philenoptera violacea (Klotzsch) Shrire

GENUS *Philenoptera* **FAMILY** Fabaceae

COMMON NAMES Lancepod, Apple-leaf, Rain tree

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds, Leaves

The young leaves can be cooked and eaten.
The seeds are washed and boiled then eaten.

DESCRIPTION

A small to medium sized tree that loses its leaves. It grows 18 m tall. The crown is rounded. The bark is grey and has shallow cracks. It flakes off in scales. A red sticky sap comes from wounds. The leaves are 28 cm long. They have leaflets along the stalk with one at the end. There are 3-5 leaflets and the end leaflet is the largest. The leaflets are 13 cm long by 3-6 cm wide. They are narrowly oval and leathery. They are densely velvety when young. The flowers are in a loose branched group at the ends of branches. These are 10-25 cm long. The flowers are 9-11 mm long. The flowers are small and violet or blue. They are pea-shaped. The flowers have a scent. The fruit is a flat pod with 1-3 seeds. It is 8-18 cm long by 2-4 cm wide. It is leathery. The seed is 12-15 mm long by about 3 mm wide and kidney shaped. The covering is smooth and reddish-brown.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It often grows along rivers on on flood plains. It grows on Kalahari sands and termite mounds. It grows between 30-1,400 m altitude. It occurs scattered in various types of woodland in medium and low altitudes. It grows in areas with an annual rainfall over 500 mm. It can tolerate drought. It can grow in arid places.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seeds. Plants need protection from frost when young.

Harvesting and Seed Production

It grows quickly.

NOTES

There are 130-150 Lonchocarpus species - an alternative name. They are mostly tropical.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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