PLANT FACT SHEET

Myrica cerifera L.

GENUS *Myrica* **FAMILY** Myricaceae

COMMON NAMES Southern bayberry, Wax myrtle

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Leaves, Leaves - tea

The leaves and berries are used in soups and stews. They are a substitute for bay leaves.
The leaves can be brewed into tea.
The fruit can be eaten fresh, preserved or fermented into wine.

DESCRIPTION

An evergreen tree. It grows to 12 m tall. The trunk is 15 cm across. The leaves are simple and yellow green. They are sword shaped and have teeth along the edge. The leaves are 6.5 cm long. The flowers are small and yellow-green. They are in catkins in the axils of the leaves. Male and female flowers occur on separate trees. The fruit are waxy berries. These are 3 mm across. They have one seed. They are bluish-white. The fruit are crowded in clusters.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It is native to tropical America. It grows in moist coastal woodlands and up to 1,000 m altitude. It can withstand seaside storms. It can tolerate salt. It needs bright shade or full sun. The soil needs to be fertile and moist. It can tolerate drought. It suits hardiness zones 6-10.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It can be grown from seed, suckers or cuttings. It can be grown as a hedge.

NOTES

There are about 50 Myrica species. The fruits waxy covering can be removed to make scented candles.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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