PLANT FACT SHEET

Bridelia micrantha (Hochst.) Baill.

GENUS *Bridelia* **FAMILY** Phyllanthaceae

COMMON NAMES Coast goldleaf, Velvet sweetleaf

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Roots, Leaves, Bark, Seed

The ripe fruit are eaten raw. They are also used for jam and juice.
The bark is eaten as a famine food. The bark is used as a stimulant.

DESCRIPTION

A deciduous tree. It grows up to 21 m tall. It has a wide leafy crown. The trunk is grey-brown. It is smooth when young but rough when older. The twigs are knobbly and covered with small scattered raised brown dots. The leaves are simple and slightly wavy. They are oval and have a point at the end. The base is narrowed or rounded. The leaves are 4-18 cm long and 2.5-10 cm wide. There are 8-15 pairs of veins. The veins and midrib are raised under the leaf. The leaves are on short robust leaf stalks. Young leaves are red. The male and female flowers occur on the same tree. The male flowers have stalks and the female flowers have no stalks. The flowers are white in in clusters in the axils of leaves. The fruit are small and oval. They are black when ripe and 10 mm long by 7 mm wide. They are edible.

HABITAT

A tropical tree. It grows in open woodland and near rivers. It can stand some frost. It is drought resistant. In Malawi it grows between 500-1,750 m altitude. It grows in areas with a rainfall between 800-2,500 mm per year. It can grow in arid places. It can grow in seasonally flooded areas.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. Seed must be sown fresh. The fruit pulp must be removed and then the seeds sown. The seedlings can be transplanted at the 2 leaf stage. They transplant easily. It can be grown by cuttings and root suckers.

Harvesting and Seed Production

It is fast growing. Fruit are collected at the end of the rainy season. In South Africa fruit are available April to May. A fruit weighs 0.4 g.

NOTES

There are about 60 Bridelia species.

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