PLANT FACT SHEET

Pachira aquatica Aublet

GENUS *Pachira* **FAMILY** Malvaceae

COMMON NAMES Guiana Chestnut, Water Chestnut

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Flowers, Leaves, Seeds

The seeds are cooked (boiled, roasted or fried) and eaten.
They can also be eaten raw.
The leaves and flowers are eaten as a vegetable.
Caution: The seeds are claimed to contain poisonous cyclopropenic fatty acids.

DESCRIPTION

An evergreen tree. It grows to a height of 7-18 m with a spread of 3 m. The trunk is erect and branches heavily. The leaves are large and compound like the fingers on a hand. There are up to 9 leaflets. The leaflets can be 30 cm long. The leaves are dark green and shiny. The flowers are cream with bright red tips. The petals are long and droop outwards. It is the red tips of the stamens that look like a shaving brush which gives it one of its common names. The flowers occur in long hanging groups. The flowers are short lived opening in the morning and falling by evening. The fruit is like a round pod. It can be 30 long and 15 cm across. The pod bursts open when ripe. The pod opens in about 5 sections. The seeds are round and 1-2 cm across. They are brown. They have a fleshy pulp. It is a good shade tree but other plants will not grow under it.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It requires a warm sunny, well protected position. It is drought tolerant. It is sensitive to frost, but the tree can survive light frosts. It can grow in moist or boggy places. It grows on creek and river banks. It originally came from South America and Mexico but has been taken to many tropical countries. It can grow in subtropical places. It suits humid places. It suits hardiness zones 10-12. In Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It is grown from seed. Seed will only remain viable for a short period so should be sown fresh. Cuttings can also be used to grow trees. Probably aerial layering can be used.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Trees are slow growing. Flowering can occur throughout the year but seed set is mostly in the late dry season. Seeds can be stored for several months.

NOTES

There are 20 Pachira species. They are from tropical America.
Also put in the family Bombacaceae. In the subfamily Bombacoideae.
Presumably in a hot house in Slovenia.

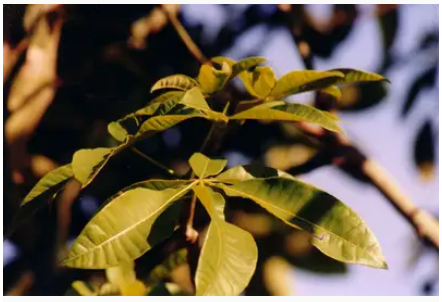
PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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