PLANT FACT SHEET

Macaranga tanarius (L.) Muell.-Arg.

GENUS *Macaranga* **FAMILY** Euphorbiaceae

COMMON NAMES Blush Macaranga, Heart Leaf

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Bark, Fruit, Leaves - for drink, Seeds

The bark, leaves and fruit are used in fermenting a drink known as "basi" in the Philippines.
The seeds are roasted and added to sugarcane wine.

DESCRIPTION

A small tree. It grows 4-10 m high. It has a spreading bushy habit. Young growth is bright green and slightly hairy. The leaves are alternate and 10 to 25 cm long by 10-15 cm wide. They are broadly oval or shield shaped. The leaf stalk joins the leaf blade in the centre. The leaf stalk is slender and 20 cm long. The leaf is bright green above and pale green underneath. The veins are pale and easy to see. The flower panicles are 4-22 cm long and in the axils of leaves. They hang downwards. The male flowers are longer and more branched. There are broad bracts near the flowers and these have fringes around them. Both male and female flowers are small and green. The fruit is a capsule 0.8 cm long and inflated. They are soft and have teeth around them. The seeds are black and shiny when ripe.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It is native from Malaysia to Australia. It will grow in many types of soil. The soil should be well-drained. It does best in a sunny position. Common and widely distributed in open places and secondary forest throughout the Philippines. In Borneo it grows up to 1,400 m above sea level. It can be near beaches and along tidal streams. It is mostly on sandy or rocky soils.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. Seed should be planted fresh. Seed germinate easily. Plants can be grown from cuttings. The cuttings should be large.

Harvesting and Seed Production

It is a fast growing plant. In Australia, plants flower in October to December and fruit from January to February.

NOTES

There are about 280 Macaranga species.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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