PLANT FACT SHEET

Carissa edulis (Forsk.) Vahl.

GENUS *Carissa* **FAMILY** Apocynaceae

COMMON NAMES Carandas plum, Simple-spined carissa

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Roots - spice, Flowers, Leaves

The fruit are eaten raw especially by children. They can be made into jam.
The fruit are fermented into wine or vinegar.
The roots are eaten as a boiled vegetable. They are used as a spice.
The leaves are used as a pot herb.

DESCRIPTION

A shrub or small tree. It grows up to 1.5-5 m tall. It has green straggly branches. There are many spines 10-40 mm long. The spines are simple. The leaves are opposite one another. They have short stalks. The leaves are leathery and widest below the middle. The flowers are white and pink. The are in the shape of a tube and 18 mm long. They are crowded in the axils of leaves. The fruit occur as berries in pairs. They are round and about 1 cm across. They are waxy and dark red when ripe. They have red sweet pulp. The fruit are edible.

Probably now Carissa spinarum

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It occurs in semi arid lowlands and in the highlands. They occur in regions with temperatures in the range 14-22°C. They occur from sea level to 2400 m but are more common at 800-1200 m altitude. It is damaged by frost but resistant to drought. They will grow on most soils. In Tanzania it grows in areas with a rainfall between 1,000-2,100 mm. They do not do well in wet areas. It can grow in arid places. It often grows on termite mounds. It suits hardiness zones 10-11. In Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seed or cuttings. For hedges they are planted at between 1 and 2 m apart and pruned to 1-1.5 m high. Seedlings need watering. Seeds are best sown in a nursery and then transplanted. Plants can be used as a hedge and pruned.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Fruit reaches maturity 4 months after flowering. Fruit are collected during the dry season. Fruit are harvested off the tree.

NOTES

There about 20-37 Carissa species. All Carissa species bear edible fruit. They grow in the tropics and subtropics. Now Carissa spinarum.

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