PLANT FACT SHEET

Malus domestica Borkh.

GENUS *Malus* **FAMILY** Rosaceae

COMMON NAMES Apple

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Leaves - tea

The fruit are eaten fresh. They are also cooked and used to make juice. The fruit can be sliced and dried.
Caution: Apples seeds contain amygdalin a cyanogenic glucoside.
The leaves are dried and used for tea.

DESCRIPTION

A small to medium sized deciduous tree. It grows 5-10 m tall. It has a single trunk and branches freely. There can be long shoots and short spurs. Young stems and twigs have a covering. The leaves are oval and 4-13 cm long by 3-7 cm wide. They are rounded at the base. The edges have irregular teeth. The flowers are usually near the ends of branches on spurs. Several flowers occur together. There are 5 white to pink petals. The fruit is usually almost round and over 5 cm across. There are 2 seeds in each cell. They are brown.

HABITAT

It is a temperate plant. It is grown at altitude in the tropics. In the tropics a short growth cycle requires mild temperatures throughout the year. This is found near the equator at altitudes of 800-1200 m where temperatures are 16-27°C. A rainfall of 1600-3200 mm and a relative humidity of 75-85%. The growing season should have good sunlight while the off season should be overcaste and cool. Most apple varieties require 1,000 hours of chilling at temperatures below 7°C during the dormant season. In the Himalayas this occurs between 1,400-2,800 m altitude. Low chilling varieties occur. It suits hardiness zones 3-9.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plats are grown by seed and by grafting. In the tropics the plants are almost evergreen with little shoot growth and flowers and fruiting can occur throughout the year. To produce consistent fruiting, branches and bent horizontal and tied down. Sometimes leaves are picked off. The importance or cross pollination is less important in the tropics. Apples are normally produce by budding using shoots of good clones. In Indonesia a root stock from wild apple is produced by root suckers or air layering. The dormancy of seeds is broken by putting them in a freezer for 30-150 days.

Harvesting and Seed Production

The fruit ripen 3.5-5 months after flowering. In the tropics flower buds can greatly exceed leaf buds so trees can produce more fruit than the leaves can support. Fruit thinning is then necessary.

NOTES

There are about 35 Malus species and very many cultivated varieties. The apple is a hybrid probably of Malus sylvestris, Malus dasyphylla and Malus pumila.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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