PLANT FACT SHEET

# *Halleria lucida* L.

**GENUS** *Halleria* **FAMILY** Stilbaceae

**COMMON NAMES** African honeysuckle, Tree-fucsia

## EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

**Edible parts:** Fruit, Flowers - nectar

The fruit are eaten raw. They are very sweet. They are used in fruit salads. They can be stored.
The flowers are sucked for their nectar.

## DESCRIPTION

A slender tree. It grows up to 12 m tall. It can be a bush in poorer growing conditions. The trunk can be 38 cm across. The bark is grey or brown and has grooves and often peels off in long strips. The leaves are simple and in opposite pairs. The base is often unequal and broad. Leaves are 1.3-10 cm long by 0.6-7 cm wide. The leaves are light green and the edges toothed. The flowers are 2.5 cm long and trumpet-shaped. The flowers can be red, orange or cream. The fruit are berries. They are black when ripe. They have a jelly-like flesh and many small seeds. They are 18 mm across. They are edible.

## HABITAT

A subtropical plant. It grows on the edge of mountain and river forests. It can tolerate some frost but does not thrive in cold conditions. It suits hardiness zones 8-10.

## PRODUCTION

### Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seed. The flesh should be removed from the seeds. These take about 6 weeks to germinate. Plants can also be grown from cuttings. These are best treated with a rooting hormone. Roots develop in about 6 weeks. Plants can also be grown by layering. A spacing of 1-4 m is suitable.

### Harvesting and Seed Production

Trees can produce fruit after 2 years but yields increase in later years. In times of famine the green fruit are harvested and stored in a hole for several days to ripen.

## NOTES

There are 4-5 Halleria species. They grow in southern Africa. Also put in the Scrophulariaceae.

## PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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