PLANT FACT SHEET

Cananga odorata (Lam.) Hook.f. & Thomson

GENUS *Cananga* **FAMILY** Annonaceae

COMMON NAMES Ylang-Ylang

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Flowers - oil, Fruit, Flavouring

The oil distilled from the flowers is used for food flavouring especially sweet foods.
Oil is used in medicine and aromatherapy.

DESCRIPTION

An evergreen tree. It grows to 25 m tall and spreads to 5 m wide. The stem is erect and the branches are weeping. The leaves are alternate and simple. They are 20 cm long and with wavy edges. They are oval and tapering. The flowers are bright green. They are 7.5 cm long with twisted, drooping, narrow petals. They have a strong smell. Flowers are on short stalks and grow from old wood. The flowers occur in clusters in the axils of leaves. The fruit is made up of 10-12 seed buds and they are black.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows best in rich, moist, well drained soil. It requires a protected sunny position. It is drought and frost tender. Temperatures need to be above 21°C for seed to grow. Trees need temperatures above 16°C. It does best in regions with an annual average temperature of 18-28°C. It grows in rainforest. It grows in moist valleys below 800 m altitude. In Costa Rica it grows up to 200 m altitude. In Colombia it grows between 100-2,220 m above sea level. In XTBG Yunnan. At MARDI. In Townsville Queens BG.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. The seed must be sown fresh. It is best to sow the seed in the field to avoid damaging the long taproot. The tree is often pruned to 3 m height to make oil harvesting more easy. The branches are bent down and pegged to the ground. Plants can also be grown from cuttings.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Plants are fast growing. They can grow 5 m per year. The tree flowers all year round. The first crop of flowers are harvested when trees are 1.5-2 years old. After that, flowers are picked twice per year. The flowers are picked early in the morning then the oil is extracted by steam distillation. A tree can yield 20-100 kg of flowers in a year.

NOTES

Probably only used in medicine. The tree can be invasive in some locations. There are 2 Cananga species. It is grown in Hawaii for perfume.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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