PLANT FACT SHEET

Combretum imberbe Wawra

GENUS *Combretum* **FAMILY** Combretaceae

COMMON NAMES Leadwood, Ivory tree

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Gum, Leaves, Fruit - gum

Occasionally an edible gum is produced. It is produced from damaged parts. It is used for confectionary. The leaves are eaten as a green vegetable.

DESCRIPTION

A tall tree which loses its leaves during the year. It can be 21 m tall. The trunk can be 1 m across. The bark cracks in rectangular flakes. The wood is very hard. The young branches and twigs often have hard spines. The leaves are simple and opposite. They are 2.5-4 cm long by 0.8-3.5 cm wide. They are oblong. The base is narrow and the edges are wavy. They are silvery grey and with red scales. The flowers are yellow in loose spikes in the axils of leaves and near the ends of branches. The fruit are 1.9 cm across and with 4 wings. They are yellowish-green but can have a red tinge.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It is usually on good soils. It grows in woodland and along streams. It grows at medium to low altitudes. It is often in mixed woodlands and along rivers. It especially grows in alluvial soils. It grows between 185-1,650 m above sea level. It can grow in salty soils. It can grow in arid places. Brisbane Botanical Gardens.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seed. The whole fruit is soaked in water and then planted. Seedlings germinate in 7-15 days. Seedlings can be transplanted at the 3 leaf stage.

Harvesting and Seed Production

It is a slow growing tree. It grows about 8 cm in one year. Trees can live for 1,000 years.

NOTES

There are about 255 Combretum species.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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