PLANT FACT SHEET

Ehretia acuminata R. Br.

GENUS *Ehretia* **FAMILY** Boraginaceae

COMMON NAMES Koda tree, Heliotrope tree, Silky Ash

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Leaves

The ripe fruit are eaten mostly raw.
The unripe fruit are pickled in India.
The leaves are used in herbal drinks.

DESCRIPTION

A medium sized to tall tree. It can grow 10-25 m tall and spread 5-12 m across. It loses its leaves during the year. The stem has deep channels along it. The bark is light grey and develops cracks along it. The young leaves are light green. The leaves are 7-15 cm long by 3-6 cm wide. They are dark green on top and paler underneath. They are oval and thin textured. The edges of the leaves have coarse teeth. The flowers are about 0.5 cm across. They are white and have a sweet scent. The flowers occur on branched clusters 5-20 cm long. These can be at the ends of branches or in the axils of leaves. The fruit is 4-6 mm across. It is round and orange and splits open when ripe. The fruit occur in large numbers. The ripe fruit is edible.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows naturally in rainforests and moist forests in tropical and subtropical areas. It suits humid locations. Often they occur along the banks of streams. It requires well drained soil. In Western China it grows up to 1500 m altitude. It cannot stand frost. Trees can tolerate sun from an early stage. It can grow in arid places. They are common in primary and secondary forest at low altitude in the Philippines from northern Luzon to the Visayas.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. Seed should be sown fresh. They usually germinate within 2 weeks. Plants can be grown from cuttings.

Harvesting and Seed Production

It is a fast growing tree. In Australia fruit mature March to April from trees flowering in September to November. In NE India plants flower and fruit March to April.

NOTES

There are about 50-75 Ehretia species. They mostly grow in the tropics and subtropics.

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