PLANT FACT SHEET

Inga edulis Mart.

GENUS *Inga* **FAMILY** Fabaceae

COMMON NAMES Ice-cream bean

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: pod, Fruit - aril, Seed

The fruit are always eaten fresh. The pods are split open and the pulp eaten.
The flavour is sweet and resembles vanilla ice-cream.

DESCRIPTION

A medium to large tree. It can be 10-20 m high. The trunk is 35-40 cm wide. The leaves are compound. They are 10-25 cm cm long. There are 4-6 pairs of leaflets. The flowers are near the ends of branches. The fruit is a long pod. It can be 1 m long and 2.5-3 cm wide. It is green. The pulp is bright white. There are several large seeds inside. The seeds are 3 cm long.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It can grow in the subtropics. It grows naturally in regions with an average temperature of 20°C. The rainfall is 1,000 - 5,000 mm per year. It grows naturally along river banks, lakes and swamps in the Brazilian Amazon. It will stand temperatures near freezing when mature. It can grow in very acid soils with a pH of 4 and with high aluminium. In Bolivia it grows up to 1500 m altitude. It suits hardiness zones 10-12.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. Fresh seeds have a high germination. The pulp around the seed is removed and they are planted 2 cm deep. Cuttings are very difficult to form roots.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Trees can start producing in 3 years. Pods do not store well. Trees fruit all year round including the dry season.

NOTES

There are 350 Inga species. Also as Mimosaceae. Probably in a hot house in Slovenia.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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