PLANT FACT SHEET

Myrianthus holstii Engl.

GENUS *Myrianthus* **FAMILY** Urticaceae

COMMON NAMES Giant yellow mulberry

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit

The pulp around the seeds is eaten. It is sweet and sour in taste.

DESCRIPTION

A medium sized tree up to 10-20 m high. The tree often has stilt roots 60 cm high. The branches are large. The bark is grey brown, smooth and with watery sap. The leaves are large and divided like the fingers on a hand. There are 5-7 leaflets. The central leaflet is largest and is 20-30 cm long. Two forms occur. The lowland form has larger leaves and fruit. The edge of the leaflets have saw teeth. The upper leaf surface is smooth and dark green while the lower surface is grey-green and hairy. The leaves have stalks. The flowers have male and female sexes on separate trees. The male flowers are greenish on stalked heads while the female flowers are yellow heads with short stalks. These female heads are about 2 cm across. The fruit is round and about 4-8 cm across. It is hard and yellow when ripe. It has sections like a pineapple. The seeds are surrounded by an acid yellow pulp. This pulp is edible.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. A rainforest tree of east Africa. It suits humid locations. It does best in moist valleys and along river banks. In Kenya it grows between 900-2,400 m altitude.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

The plant can be grown from seeds. The fruit is crushed and the seeds collected. Seed can be stored in a cool dry place. Plants can be cut back and will re-grow. Plants can be grown from root suckers.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Fruit are edible from September to December in Zimbabwe. In Tanzania fruit are collected from February to June.

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