PLANT FACT SHEET

Crataegus germanica (L.) Kuntze

GENUS *Crataegus* **FAMILY** Rosaceae

COMMON NAMES Medlar, German Medlar

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit

The flesh of the fruit is eaten once it is very ripe. Normally it is eaten after frost.
The newly ripened fruit can be made into jelly.
They are used to make a juice drink.
Ripe fruit can be baked or made into jams and jellies.

DESCRIPTION

A small deciduous tree. It grows up to 6-8 m high. It spreads to 8 m wide. It is often gnarled and sprawling. It loses its leaves during the year. It is sometimes spiny. The bark is grey-brown and smooth at first but cracks into thin plates. The bark is orange-brown when freshly exposed. The leaves are large oblong. They are 5-15 cm long and 5 cm across. They are dull green and downy. They turn yellow and brown in autumn. They are on very short stalks. The flowers are white and occur singly. They are 5 cm across. They are produced at the ends of branches. Fruit are brown, apple shaped and hard. They are 3 cm across. The fruit have sepals which persist at the top. The fruit are edible. There are some named cultivated varieties.
Often as Mespilus germanica.

Probably now Crataegus germanica

HABITAT

It is a temperate plant. It is native to S.W. Asia and S.E. Europe. They will grow in most soils but a well drained warm loam is best. They will not tolerate waterlogged conditions. It is a hardy plant. It has a chilling requirement possibly of 1,000 hours under 7°C. Hobart Botanical Gardens. It suits hardiness zones 4-9.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seed. The seed need to be stratified and are slow to germinate. They can take two years to germinate. Seedling trees also often revert to poorer smaller fruits. Plants are usually grown by grafting onto rootstock of hawthorn.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Trees fruit after 3-5 years. Fruit are produced in winter. Fruit need to be very ripe before being edible. Sometimes this is achieved by waiting till frosts occur or putting them on hay in a well ventilated place to soften.

NOTES

There is only one Mespilus species. (Mespilus canescens occurs in Akansas in North America.)

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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