PLANT FACT SHEET

Paullinia cupana H. B. Kunth

GENUS *Paullinia* **FAMILY** Sapindaceae

COMMON NAMES Guarana, Cupana, Fruits of youth

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds

The seeds are extracted and roasted and used as a stimulant. It contains caffeine.
The seeds are roasted for several hours then beaten into a paste and smoked for about 2 months before being ground in a powder. It is used as a stimulant in water and used to flavour drinks.
They are used as the base for a drink called guarana.

DESCRIPTION

A creeping or climbing shrub. It can grow to 13 m high. it is often 1.8-3 m tall and spreads 3-6 m wide. Leaves contain 5 leaflets. They are irregularly compound. There are coiled tendrils which support the plant. The flowers are small and white with male and female flowers separate but on the same tree. The fruit are small and bright red. Fruit split open when ripe. The seeds are large and black and encased in a thin white pulp.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows in the Amazon rainforest. It is along the Madeira and Tapajos rivers. It grows in regions with a rainfall of 2,200-2,500 m altitude. The temperatures average 28°-29°C. It must have a temperature above 12°C. It suits hardiness zones 11-12.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. Seed need to be sown very fresh. Seeds can become non viable after 72 hours in storage. Seeds may take 100 days to germinate. Plants are fertilized by bees. It grows on poor acid soils. The soil pH is 3.5-4.5. It cn grow in soils with high concentration of aluminium. A spacing of 4-5 m part is used. Cuttings and grafts can be used with misting chambers.

NOTES

There are 180 Paullinia species. All except P. pinnata are in tropical America. The seeds contain caffeine which acts as a stimulant. The caffeine content is higher than coffee or tea. The seeds are 2.7-5.8% caffeine.

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