PLANT FACT SHEET

Sclerocarya birrea (A. Rich.) Hochst.

GENUS *Sclerocarya* **FAMILY** Anacardiaceae

COMMON NAMES Ethiopian marvola nut, Maroola plum, Marula

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: seeds, Fruit, Nuts, Vegetable, Leaves, Seed, Seeds - oil

The ripe fruit are eaten raw. The juice is also fermented to produce a cider-like drink. Fruit are used for jam.
The oily kernel is eaten. It also produces an edible oil.
The leaves are dried and used as tea.

DESCRIPTION

A shrub or tree. It grows 9 m high and spreads 6 m wide. It can be 15 m tall. It loses its leaves during the year. The crown is dense and rounded. The bark is grey and finely cracked. The leaves have leaflets along the stalk. The leaves are near the tips of the branches. The edges of the leaflets can be wavy. Plants are separately male and female. Female flowers are reddish and on long stalks at the ends of branches. The fruit are oval or round and 3-4 cm long. They are green but turn yellow as they ripen. The skin is tough and leathery. The pulp is juicy and white. There is one large stone. There are some subspecies.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows in the lowlands. It grows in equatorial Africa. It grows in dry areas. It grows in the Sahel. It can grow in arid places. It grows in Miombo woodland in Africa. In Brisbane Botanical Garden. In Ethiopia it grows between 500-1,700 m above sea level.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown by seeds but the seeds do not easily germinate. They need to have a hole cut in the hard seed coat or put into sulphuric acid. The seeds can be soaked over night in water before planting.
It can be grown from cuttings and root suckers. Using fertilizer, manure and early irrigation reduce the survival and growth of young plants. They are adapted to low fertility and seasonal rainfall.

NOTES

There are 4 Sclerocarya species. The fruit are rich in Vitamin C.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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