PLANT FACT SHEET

Fagus sylvatica L.

GENUS *Fagus* **FAMILY** Fagaceae

COMMON NAMES Beech, English beech, European beech

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Nuts, Seeds, Leaves, Seeds - oil, Wood - flavouring, Sap, bud

The kernels of the nuts are eaten, raw or roasted and salted.
The kernel produces an oil good for cooking food in. The oil is also used for salads. It is made into beechwood butter.
The young leaves are eaten raw in salads. They are also used in liqueurs.
The wood is used for ageing beers and for smoking hams. It is ground and mixed with corn flour for bread.

DESCRIPTION

A tall tree. It grows to 20-30 m high. It can spread 12-18 m wide. The bark is silver grey at maturity. The crown is dense, spreading and oval. The leaves are oval and young leaves are clear green then turn dark green before becoming golden then copper and brown. The leaves are 10 cm long by 6 cm wide. They have a short abrupt point. They have a wavy edge which may have small teeth. There are 5-8 side veins to the leaf. It loses its leaves during the year. The flowers are separately male and female. Male flowers are yellow and in drooping balls. The female flowers are greenish and in clusters. The nuts are small and triangular shaped. They are edible. There are many named varieties. There is a weeping variety of common beech. The branches are thick and hang down.

HABITAT

It is a temperate plant. It is a native of Europe. It needs a well drained soil. It can grow in alkaline soils. It suits hardiness zones 5-9. Arboretum Tasmania. National Arboretum Canberra.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seed. Seeds only grow poorly. Plants also put out suckers which can be cut off and planted. Seeds need cold treatment for 3-4 months.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Plants grow slowly. Grafted trees produce in 3-4 years. The nuts are collected after falling.

NOTES

There are 10 Fagus species.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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