PLANT FACT SHEET

Carapa procera DC

GENUS *Carapa* **FAMILY** Meliaceae

COMMON NAMES Bitter kola, Crab nut

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds, Fruit

The seeds are used to make a type of butter.
The ripe fruit are eaten raw.

DESCRIPTION

An evergreen tree. It grows up to 25 m tall. The branches are crooked, spread out wide and curve over. It has a dense crown of leaves. The trunk is often fluted and the branches grow low down on the trunk. The bark is thin and smooth and dark grey. It has a gummy resin when cut. The leaves are very large and at the ends of the thick small branches. The young leaves are red then orange and change to green as they mature. They are divided into 6-9 pairs of leaflets. Each leaflet is oblong and about 25 cm long by 9 cm wide. The leaves have a rounded tip with a blunt point. The flowers are in a much branched head shaped like a pyramid. It is 70 cm long. Each flower has 5 yellow, pink and white petals about 1 cm long. The fruit is a large woody capsule 12-15 cm across. The fruit cracks open in 5 parts. There are 12-20 angular seeds inside. The seeds are 3 cm long and shiny dark brown. They have a rough pitted surface.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows in the rainforest. It suits humid locations. It can also be in savannah woodland, palm groves and along river banks.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seed. The seed germinate easily. Seeds should be planted within 2 months. The young plants should have light shade.

Harvesting and Seed Production

The plant is slow growing. In Congo fruit are available November to December.

NOTES

There are 25 Carapa species. There are 3 Carapa species in tropical America.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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PROVIDED BY **Food Plants International**

French, B.R. & Maynard, A.R. Food Plants International Database. Food Plants International

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