PLANT FACT SHEET

Syzygium jambos (L.) Alston

GENUS *Syzygium* **FAMILY** Myrtaceae

COMMON NAMES Rose apple, Jambos

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Flowers

The fruit are eaten raw. They are poor as a dessert fruit but because of the sweet rose smell are often crystallised and used in sweets. They can be used for jams and jellies. (It is good to mix with other fruits as rose apple helps the jam to set.)
The flowers are candied.

DESCRIPTION

An evergreen tree. It grows up to 7.5-15 m tall and with a spread of 4 m. It can be a small shrub. The stem is erect and 20-40 cm across. The branches hang downwards. The bark is greyish-green. The young twigs are either flattened of somewhat square in cross section. The leaves are simple, thick and shiny. The leaves are narrow and pointed (10-20 cm long and 3-4 cm wide). They taper towards both ends. Young leaves are brownish red coloured. The leaves have 16-18 pairs of side veins which join near the edge of the leaf. The leaf stalk is 1 cm long. The flowers are large (4-5 cm) and greenish-white and fluffy. They occur in clusters at the ends of branches. The fruit is rose scented and apple like. They are dull yellow and tinged pink. Fruit are 4 cm across. The fruit have a distinct crown at the end. They contain 1 or 2 large seeds. The seeds are pale brown. The fruit is edible.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It needs adequate moisture and suits the warm moist tropics. It can't stand waterlogging. It prefers a rich well composted soil but will do well on poorer soils. It does best in an open sunny position. It is drought and frost tender. It is often along stream banks. It does well near the sea shore. Young plants need shade and moisture but established trees can tolerate harder conditions. It probably grows up to about 1200 metres above sea level in equatorial regions but near the altitudinal and latitudinal limits it produces no fruit. Trees can grow on a variety of soils. A pH between 5.5 and 7 is recommended. In Nepal it grows between 600-1400 m altitude. It suits hardiness zones 10-12. In Sichuan and Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seed. Seeds germinate well and have no dormancy. Seeds often give rise to more than one seedling. These can be carefully separated when young. As fruit quality varies it is best to preserve better kinds of trees using vegetative propagation methods. Plants can be grafted or budded if needed.

Cuttings root fairly easily in sand. Tip cuttings are suitable. Trees need to be 6-8 metres apart. It can be grown as a hedge.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Trees grow slowly. They start bearing when 4-5 years old. Fruiting is normally seasonal but over a long season. In the northern hemisphere it flowers from April to May and fruit ripen July to August. A tree can produce 400 fruit is a season.

NOTES

It has anticancer properties.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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