PLANT FACT SHEET

Parartocarpus venenosus (Zoll. and Mor.) Becc.

GENUS *Parartocarpus* **FAMILY** Moraceae

COMMON NAMES Purut

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Seeds

The seeds are eaten either raw or cooked.
The ripe fruit is edible. They are very dry so a drink is needed with them.
CAUTION The sap of the tree is often used as an arrow poison.
The unripe seeds are poisonous.

DESCRIPTION

A medium sized tree up to 35-45 m tall with milky sap. The trunk is 45 cm across. The bark is yellow or grey-brown. It is papery and scaly. The twigs are 3-8 mm thick. The leaves are alternate and oblong and pointed at the tip. They are leathery. They can be rounded or pointed at the base. They are 8 to 15 cm long and 5 to 7 cm wide. They are smooth on the upper surface and can have hairs on the veins underneath. The flowers are borne in the axils of the leaves. Flowers are separately male and female but both on the one tree. Male heads are round and 15-30 mm across. They are covered by close, hard spines. The flower stalk is 12-35 mm long. The fruit is a cluster of "seeds" forming a rough checkered head about 18 cm across. The "seeds" are about 3 cm long. The fruit is brown on the outside and yellow inside and irregular in shape.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. They occur in central and southern Luzon, Mindoro, Samar and Leyte in the Philippines. The subspecies that occurs in Papua New Guinea occurs from 5 to 1000 m altitude. It occurs in humid forest. It suits the wet tropics.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It grows wild. It can be grown from seed. Seeds are distributed naturally by flying foxes.

Harvesting and Seed Production

The fruit turns very brown on the outside and has a sweet smell when ripe. Fruit production is seasonal.

NOTES

Pakal Parartocarpus venenosus

What is the plant like?

This is quite a large tree up to 25 metres or more tall. It has milky sap inside.

The leaves of the tree are entire on outline and they are arranged on a spiral around the stem

The leaf looks like this.

The leaves are shiny on both surfaces. The veins are raised under the leaf and sunken on top. The leaf is lighter green underneath.

The fruit is large and can be 14cm to 24cm across. It has an irregular shape. The fruit is brown and slightly rough on the outside and with yellow flesh inside. There are quite a few large seeds inside. The seeds are something like breadfruit.

The seeds have a yellow layer over them and are white inside.

The fruit hand from the branches similarly to breadfruit. As the fruit get ripe they give off as strong sweet smell. This helps people find the fruit in the bush.

How are pakal trees grown?

Often pakal trees just grow wild in the bush. Flying foxes eat the fruit and they spread the seeds around. Small trees are sometimes transplanted nearer to houses.

Where do pakal trees grow?

Pakal trees can grow from sea level up to about 1000 metres above sea level. Mostly they are near the sea and are more common on islands.

In Papua New Guinea they mostly occur along the North Coast and on islands off the coast.

Where did the name come from?

Pakal is a Tok Ples name from one of the languages of Manus. It also has other Tok Ples names in other areas of PNG, but doesn't have a common Tok Pisin name.

The scientific name is Parartocarpus venenosus. The word parartocarpus means near or related to the breadfruit group of plants. Pakal or parartocarpus is a fruit tree like breadfruit or Kapaik.

Tok ples names.

Wodeo Is salang
Madang yang
Manus pakal
New Ireland,Kalau situ
New Ireland,Lamekot livu
Rabaul lapua

How are pakal used?

The yellow flesh inside the pakal fruit is eaten cooked. The flesh of the fruit is very dry and therefore it is necessary to have a drink of water afterwards.

The seeds are poisonous at least when they are unripe. In some places the seeds are cooked and eaten, but only after they have been soaked in sea water for a few days.

PICTURES



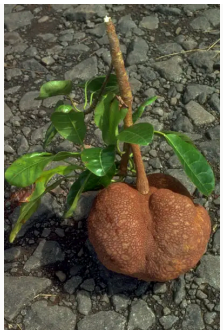
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