PLANT FACT SHEET

Bauhinia tomentosa L.

GENUS *Bauhinia* **FAMILY** Fabaceae

COMMON NAMES St Thomas Tree, Yellow Bauhinia, Yellow tree bauhinia

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Seeds, Flowers

The young sour leaves are eaten with rice or added to soups. They are also used to flavour other foods.
The seeds are also eaten.
The flowers are boiled and eaten as a vegetable and used in stir fries.

DESCRIPTION

A shrub or small tree growing up to 1-8 m tall. It often has drooping branches. The small branches can be smooth or softly hairy. The leaves vary in shape but are more or less round. They are 1-10 cm long and 1-11 cm wide. They are divided into rounded lobes for about half their length. The leaf stalk is 1-3 cm long. The flowers hang over and are bell shaped. Mostly the flowers occur in pairs in the axils of leaves. They can also occur on up to 7 flowered stalks. The petals are lemon yellow. Sometimes they have a purple blotch. The petals overlap. There are 10 stamens. The fruit are straight long pods 7-15 cm long and 1-2 cm wide. They are rather woody and open naturally.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows at low altitude woodland and along rivers. It needs well drained soil. It can be in coastal dune bush. In East Africa it grows from sea level to 2,100 m above sea level. In XTBG Yunnan. It suits hardiness zones 10-12. In Brisbane Botanical gardens.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seeds and also by grafting or air-layering.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Plants grow quickly.

NOTES

It is grown as an ornamental. There are about 250-350 Bauhinia species. Most are in the tropics. Also as Caesalpinaceae.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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