PLANT FACT SHEET

Ravenala madagascariensis Sonn.

GENUS *Ravenala* **FAMILY** Strelitziaceae

COMMON NAMES Traveller's palm, Traveller's tree

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds, Leaves, Fruit, Cabbage, seeds - oil

The fat found in the fleshy layer around the seeds is used in cooking.
Sugary sap is extracted from the trunk.
The seeds are eaten. A kind of flour is made from them.
There is watery sap in the enlarged leaf bases.

DESCRIPTION

An evergreen shrub. It grows to 10-16 m high and spreads to 3-6 m across. The stem is erect, formed by the bases of the old leaves. It is palm like. The leaves are arranged in 2 opposite rows on long leaf stalks which form sheaths around the stem. They are 5 m long, are closely overlapping and open like fans. They are paddle shaped. The flowers are white and have 3 petals. They occur in long spikes and have boat shaped bracts in the axils. The fruit capsules contain seeds with a bright blue seed covering (aril). The seeds are edible.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It does best in rich, moist soil. It needs a protected, sunny, warm position. It is damaged by drought and frost. It grows from sea level to 1,000 m altitude in Madagascar. It needs a temperature above 16-18°C. It suits hardiness zones 10-12. In XTBG Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seed or by division of suckers. Seeds grow slowly.

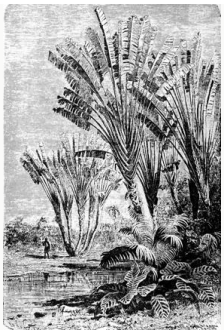
NOTES

There is one Ravenala species.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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