PLANT FACT SHEET

Madhuca longifolia (L.) J. F. Macbr.

GENUS *Madhuca* **FAMILY** Sapotaceae

COMMON NAMES Mahua, Illipe, Indian butter tree

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Flowers, Seeds - oil, Leaves, flower - nectar

The flowers are eaten dried, roasted or made into jelly, sugar and wine. They are a sweetener.
They are also used to make alcohol. Caution: Alcohol is a cause of cancer.
An edible oil is obtained from the seed. Seed oil is used for cooking. It also substitutes for butter.
The ripe fruit are eaten raw.
The fleshy corolla is eaten raw or roasted.
The leaves are also eaten.

DESCRIPTION

A tree which loses its leaves. It grows to about 8-20 m high. The bark is grey-brown with a hint of yellow. The leaves are crowded at the ends of branches. They are 19 cm long. The leaves have stalks. They are oval and taper to the tip. The leaves are wavy at the edges and are densely hairy at first. The flowers have stalks. They are cream and succulent. The fruit is oval and fleshy. It is green and about 5 cm long. There are 1 or 2 seeds.

HABITAT

A tropical and subtropical plant. It suits the hot tropical lowlands with low to medium rainfall. In Nepal it grows to about 200 m altitude. It can grown to 1,700 m above sea level in Indonesia. It grows in open places.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

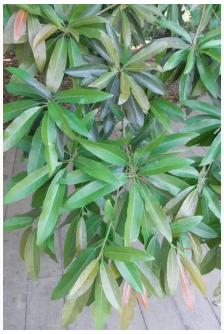
Plants are grown from seed. They can also be grown by cuttings.

Harvesting and Seed Production

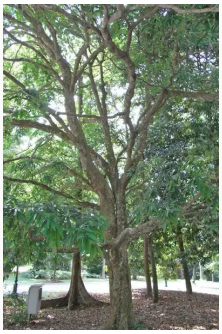
Seeds and dried flowers can be stored for several months in a dry container.

PICTURES

Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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