



## PLANT FACT SHEET

# *Hymenocardia acida* Tul.

GENUS *Hymenocardia* FAMILY Phyllanthaceae

COMMON NAMES Heart-fruit, Large red-heart

## EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

**Edible parts:** Leaves - flavouring, Fruits, Stems

The young fruits are eaten. They are sour.

The young leaves are sometimes eaten as a flavouring.

## DESCRIPTION

A shrub or small tree. It grows up to 6 m high. The bark is light brown, smooth and flaky. Young branches are rust coloured. Leaves are oblong. They are 2.5-9 cm long by 2-4 cm wide. They have brown velvety hairs. The flowers are separate sexes on separate trees. Male flowers are reddish in spikes up to 6 cm long. Female flowers are green. Each one looks like a small fruit with 2 long red forked styles. They can be single or in clusters. The fruit is a flattened capsule with 2 wings. These give the shape of a heart. These become red when mature.

## HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows in savanna and deciduous woodland. It grows on sandy, loamy or clay soils. It grows from sea level to 1,750 m altitude. It can grow in arid places.

## PRODUCTION

### Cultivation

Plants are grown from seeds. The wings are taken off the seeds and the seeds are then soaked in cold water for 24 hours before sowing. The shrub can be cut back and let re-grow.

## NOTES

There are 6 *Hymenocardia* species. It is also put in the family Euphorbiaceae and Hymenocardiaceae.

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