

# Eriobotrya japonica

*Rosaceae*

China, Japan

*Eng: Loquat*

**Ecology:** A small evergreen tree very widely planted in its native China, Japan and northern India, and also in the Mediterranean and southern and western USA. It grows well in the highlands of tropical Africa where it is mainly planted in cities and towns, 1,500-2,400 m. Requires good rainfall but is drought resistant once established. In Eritrea, it has been cultivated in home gardens in Asmara and Sabur.

**Uses:** Firewood, poles, posts, carving, **food (fruit)**, **bee forage**, mulch, **ornamental**, shade, windbreak, jam, syrup (fruit).

**Description:** A dense evergreen shrub or **small tree to 7 m, branching close to the ground**. **BARK:** Grey and rough, young stems hairy. **LEAVES:** Stalkless, **dark green, shiny above, woolly hairs below**, about 35 cm long, the tip pointed and the edge prickly, toothed, young leaves paler, foliage in **upward pointing tufts**. **FLOWERS:** **Cream-white, scented**, in pyramidal heads at the end of branches, each flower 2 cm across, flower **buds covered with golden-brown hairs**. **FRUIT:** In loose clusters, **yellow, egg shaped**, usually 2-7 cm long, acid-sweet flesh around a few large brown-black seeds.

**Propagation:** Direct sowing, seedlings, wildings.

**Seed:** No. of seeds per kg:  $\pm 600$ .

**treatment:** Not necessary.

**storage:** Seed does not store well. It should be sown while still fresh.

**Management:** Pruning.

**Remarks:** Seeds are poisonous and should be removed before cooking. Grafted trees, when available, remain smaller but make stronger growth and produce fruit faster.

