

Eriobotrya japonica

Rosaceae

China, Japan

Am: *Wosbmella*

Eng: *Loquat*

Ecology

A small evergreen tree very widely planted in its native China, Japan and northern India, and also in the Mediterranean. In Ethiopia, it is mainly planted in cities and towns, 1,500–2,400 m. It grows well in Moist and Wet Weyna Dega agroclimatic zones. Requires moderate to heavy rainfall but is drought resistant once established.

Uses

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

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 at site, seedlings (sow seed in pots), wildings. Root development is quite fast, so its advisable to sow seed directly at site. Sow 2–3 cm deep.

Seed

About 600 seed per kg. The seeds should not be dried (recalcitrant). Fresh seeds germinate well and fast.

Treatment: Not necessary.

Storage: Seed does not store well. Use fresh seed

Management

Fairly fast growing, 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. Such improved varieties can be multiplied by air layering as well as T-budding and grafting. Healthy loquat seedlings can be used as rootstock. Use of improved varieties is recommended.

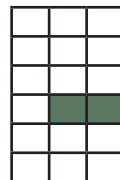




Photo: Patrick Maundu



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