Tree Tomato

Solanum betaceum

Code: TREE-00003 **Local / Vernacular name:** Seibengeno

Description

The Tree Tomato or tamarillo is an egg-shaped, edible frit that grows on a small, fast-growing subtropical shrub.

It reaches upto 10 to 18ft. and shortlived, typically productive for 4 to 6 years.

Botanical Details

1. Small evergreen medium-sized tree usually 2-5 m.
2. Stem is soft, woody with many branches.
3. Leaves are simple, alternate, large, heart-shaped, soft, aromatic when crushed.
4. Flowers are small, star-shaped, pinkish-white to pale purple, borne in clusters, bisexual.
5. Fruits are egg-shaped, berry, 4-10cm long, smooth, shiny, skin, red-orange or yellow when ripe.
6. Seeds are numerous, small, flat and black.

Uses & Importance

Ecological:

1. It support pollination, abundant flowers attract local bees, bumblebees, and other beneficial insects.
2. Ripe fruits on branches provide a steady food source for native birds and small mammals.
3. Evergreen foliage and woody root systems protect fragile mountain and hill slopes from rain runoff and topsoil loss.
4. Fits well into multi-layered traditional gardens, increasing plant diversity without requiring clear-cutting.

Medicinal:

1. Local communities historically viewed the plant as a symbol of vitality and dietary resilience during seasonal changes.
2. People warm the large tree tomato leaves and wrap them around the neck to soothe severe sore throats.
3. Traditional healers cook the fruit pulp in embers and apply it as a warm poultice to reduce inflamed tonsils.
4. It has been used as a tonic or cleanser to support liver wellness.

Cultural:

1. It is prized for a sharp, tangy, and tart flavor that cuts through rich or smoky dishes.
2. Made into fresh chili-infused dips, pickles, and hot sauces in South America, Nepal, and Northeast India.
3. Frequently grown directly in family kitchen gardens rather than large commercial monocultures.

Location

GPS: 12.97160000, 77.59460000

Directions: https://www.google.com/maps/dir/?api=1&travelmode=walking&destination=12.9716%2C77.5946