

Katuk aka Sweet Leaf Bush

Sauropus androgynus



Katuk is a shrub, indigenous to Southeast Asia that is cultivated in Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, and India. It thrives in tropical climates in lowland rainforests where it grows between 4-6 feet tall. The shrub blooms in the summer and fall with small, flat, round, yellow to red flowers in the leaf axil followed by a purple fruit with tiny black seeds. It takes two Katuk shrubs to pollinate and produce fruit.

Katuk is edible. There is a premium market for the tender shoots, even the flowers, small fruit, and seeds of the Katuk. The flavor is said to be like that of a pea with a bit of a nutty flavor. It is eaten in Asia, both raw and cooked. The shrub is cultivated in shaded areas, irrigated frequently, and fertilized to produce rapidly growing tender tips that are similar to asparagus. The plant is highly nutritious with about half of its nutrition as protein! Sun to part sun. Keep well watered in full sun conditions. Tropical, so protect from frost and freeze.