



Daleys Fruit Tree Nursery

Malabar Chestnut:

Botanical name:	<i>Pachira aquatica</i>
Family name:	BOMBACEAE
Origin:	northern Brazil

Description:

The Malabar chestnut is a very showy evergreen tree with greenish bark that can grow to 20 metres in the tropics. In cultivation however the growth is more like 5 metres tall with a spread of 3 metres. The shiny bright green alternate leaves grow to about 30cm long and are quickly shed. Young leaves and flowers are cooked and used as a vegetable.

Flowers:

The petals of the very large creamy white flowers of the Malabar chestnut curl back to the base of the flower, leaving only the spectacular clusters of 7.5 to 10cm cream-white stamens.

Fruit:

The five-valved fruit of Malabar chestnut is a woody green pod which may reach 30cm in length and 6cm in diameter. The tightly packed seeds (nuts) inside enlarge until the pod burst and the seed falls to the ground. The rounded seeds are edible raw or roasted. The nuts of the Malabar chestnut are harvested when the seed pods burst. The raw nuts taste like peanuts and will keep for months in a cool, dry place. Roasted or fried in oil they have the flavour of chestnuts, and can be ground into a flour for bread baking.

Climate:

The plant grows well in mild inland parts and coastal areas. The plant will tolerate brief exposure to low temperatures but may drop some or most of its leaves. Malabar chestnuts make attractive potted plants.

Planting requirements:

A frost-free location with some protection from hot, drying winds is the best choice for the plant. It will take full sun to partial shade. Overall, the tree is a handsome landscape addition. Malabar chestnuts are not overly fussy about soil as long as it is well drained. The Malabar chestnut needs consistent and regular watering.
