

Madrono

Botanical Name: *Reedia madruno*

Common Name: Madrono

Origin: Central and South America

Distribution: Widely in the Americas as a feature tree. It is of little commercial value as a fruit tree even though the small sub acid fruit is highly priced.

Australian Distribution: In Tropical Northern Australia it is mostly planted as a feature tree.

Preferred Climate and Soil Types: It is tolerant of salt and varying soil conditions, it will however benefit from liquid fertilizer and mulching. Acidic soils, such as in the Darwin region, may require the addition of lime to aid growth of the Madrono tree.

Description: Madrono is an interesting, and attractive looking feature tree, irrespective of fruit production. They have deep green, shiny, leathery pairs of leaves that flush a spectacular fiery reddish bronze. The lateral branches are opposite, symmetrical and widely angled giving a beautiful conical form. It is slow growing and will reach a mature height of about eight metres. The fruit looks like a shrivelled droopy lemon, and has a similar rind. The interior is soft white pulp and has a slight citrus taste. The fruit is not very well known outside of South America.

Varieties: Not known

Culture: It is relatively easy to grow from seed, and can be adaptable to a wide range of situations in the Darwin region. The tree is slow to grow and can take up to 7 years to fruit.

Pests and Diseases: Trees have few if any pest problems and once established have very low needs for maintenance.

Fruiting Season: Almost all year round

Harvesting: Madrono fruit are picked and eaten when a fully ripe yellow/orange colour. The pulp has a pleasant aromatic sub-acid flavour and they also make an excellent jam. If they are picked unripe they are very acidic and do not ripen off the tree. The Madrono tree can produce a huge number of fruit per year which are loved by children. A safe and attractive tree for school gardens, it is planted at a number of schools in Darwin.

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