

Bixa orellana

Botanical Nam: *Bixa orellana*

Common Name: Lipstick tree

Morphological Charateristics:

This plant stands alone in its family; a profusely fruiting shrub, reaching 6 - 20 feet tall and age up to about 50 years. Annato has large 5-15 cm long, 4-11 cm wide, pointed leaves. Flowers occur in vertical upright clusters, which prominently appear above the foliage. Flowers are showy, white or pink, nearly 5 cm broad, with five petals and a dense mass of stamens in the center. The petals often tend to curl up. Fruit is 2-valved, ovoid, red, spiny, 2.5-5 cm long; seeds many, ovate, with a scarlet covering. Although a native of West Indies, lipstick tree has been cultivated in India for many centuries for the yellow-orange dye obtained from its seeds, which is still used as a safe coloring agent for foods. Approximately 50 seeds grow inside of the pod. Depending on the color of the flowers, the seedpod is either green or red; the seeds have the same coating in both. These seeds are processed to obtain the orange-yellow pigments, bixin and norbixin (caratenoids), as dye for the food, cosmetic and soap industries.



Growing Season and Type:

1. This dye is used to color the cheddar cheese and is also used for the coloring of rice.
2. The used part is the dried pulp of the fruit. Lipstick tree is native to tropical America, but widely cultivated throughout the tropical world, since long back.
3. Flowering: October-December.



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1. Flower of *Bixa orellana*
2. Leaf of *Bixa orellana*
3. Tree of *Bixa orellana*



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Source: www.pfaf.org/user/Plant.aspx