PLANT FACT SHEET

Cussonia arborea A. Rich.

GENUS *Cussonia* **FAMILY** Araliaceae

COMMON NAMES Octopus cabbage tree, Deadman's fingers

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit

The ripe fruit are eaten.

DESCRIPTION

A small tree. It grows up to 9 m high. It loses its leaves. The stem produces gum when cut. The leaves are like fingers on a hand and there are 7-9 lobes. The leaf stalk is 12-16 cm long. The flower spikes are 20-40 cm long. They are densely covered with small flowers. The fruit are very small. They are round and black when ripe.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It needs a warm, frost-free climate. In Malawi it grows above 1,000 m altitude. It can resist fire. In Zimbabwe it grows between 850-1,750 m above sea level.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seed. It can also be grown from large cuttings of from root cuttings.

Harvesting and Seed Production

In Malawi the season is February to March.

NOTES

There are 25 Cussonia species. They occur in South Africa.

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