



PLANT FACT SHEET

Piper methysticum G. Forster

GENUS *Piper* FAMILY Piperaceae

COMMON NAMES Kava

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Roots, Leaves

The roots are peeled, pulped and fermented to make a drink.

The leaves are cooked and used as a vegetable.

DESCRIPTION

A shrub. It grows 2-3 m high. It has thick woody underground stems or rhizomes. The roots become knotty and greyish-green. The stems have prominent swollen nodes. The leaves are large and rounded. They are heart shaped and have veins spreading out like fingers on a hand. The flowers occur in greenish white spikes. These occur singly.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It suits hot humid places. It will grow in most well drained soils. It does well in moist, cool valleys. It needs deep, fertile, organically rich soils.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It can be grown from seed or stem cuttings. Plants are grown at a spacing of 1 m apart.

Harvesting and Seed Production

The roots are harvested 2-4 years after planting.

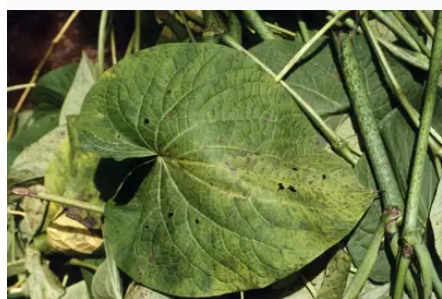
NOTES

There are between 1000-2000 Piper species. They are mostly in the tropics. This plant is probably a sterile cultivar of *Piper wichmannii*.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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