PLANT FACT SHEET

Rheum officinale Baill.

GENUS *Rheum* **FAMILY** Polygonaceae

COMMON NAMES Chinese Rhubarb, Kelembak

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: leaves, Root, Seed

The dried rhizomes are used to make tonic wines and other alcoholic drinks. Caution: Alcohol is a cause of cancer.
Extracts of the root are used to flavour bitter tonics, drinks, syrups, and baked goods.
The stalks are eaten as a snack.
Caution: The leaves contain oxalates and are poisonous.

DESCRIPTION

A herb that keeps growing from year to year. It grows 1-15 cm high. It has a thick rhizome or underground stem. The leaves near the base have long leaf stalks. They are 15-30 cm long and 1-2 cm thick and fleshy. The leaf blades are almost round and 30-60 cm long and wide. They can have lobes. The flowers are greenish-white. They are in groups at the top of the plant. The fruit are dry and one seeded and with wings.

HABITAT

A temperate plant. It suits hardiness zones 7-10. It grows in Sichuan and Yunnan.

NOTES

There are about 50 Rheum species. This one is mainly used for medicine.

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