PLANT FACT SHEET

Rubia cordifolia Linn. sensu Hook.f.

GENUS *Rubia* **FAMILY** Rubiaceae

COMMON NAMES Indian Madder

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Fruit, Leaves - salt, Twigs - tea, Root - flavouring

The young leaves are eaten as a side dish. They are usually steamed.
They are also burnt and used as a vegetable salt. The ash is soaked in water and filtered and this is used to soften other vegetables when cooking. It can be used as a substitute for sodium bicarbonate.
The fresh fruit are eaten.
The root is dried as a powder and used as flavouring in local liquor.

DESCRIPTION

A climber. It is a straggling plant. It grows 1-8 m long. It keeps gorwing from year to year. The stems are angled and have small hooks. The leaves occur as 4 in a ring. The leaves are often heart shaped at the base and are broadest just above the base. They narrow to a long tip. The leaves are 3 cm long by 1 cm wide. The flowers are small and greenish-yellow and on branched stalks at the ends of shoots or in the axils of leaves. The fruit are fleshy and black and divided into halves. The seeds are kidney shaped.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It can grow in a wide range of conditions. It grows from sea level to 2,600 m altitude. In Tanzania it grows between 1,100-2,600 m above sea level. In Indonesia it grows from 500 m above sea level to high in the mountains. In Sichuan and Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It can be grown by seed or cuttings. Fresh seed grows most quickly. Plants should be grown in light shade.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Leaves are collected during the rainy season. The ash from burnt plants can be stored for several months.

NOTES

It has anticancer properties. It is used in medicine.

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