PLANT FACT SHEET

Parkia filicoidea Welw. ex Oliver

GENUS *Parkia* **FAMILY** Fabaceae

COMMON NAMES African locust bean

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds, Pulp of pod, Leaves, flower - nectar, Vegetable

The pods are eaten cooked.
The pulp in the pods is eaten.
The seeds are boiled and fermented then eaten. This has a strong smell but is removed by frying or roasting.
The seeds can also be powdered and used for flavouring soups and rice dishes.
The leaves are cooked as used as a vegetable.
The seeds are pressed for cooking oil.

DESCRIPTION

A deciduous tree up to 30-35 m tall. It has a spreading flat crown. The trunk has small rounded buttresses. The bark is scaly or smooth and grey to yellow brown. The bark becomes dark and cracked with age. If the bark is cut it has an orange coloured resin. The leaves are feathery. A leaf is made up of 6-9 pairs of leaflets each divided into 16-24 pairs of smaller leaflets. These are about 2 cm long and 5-8 mm wide. The flowers are small in bright red club shaped heads. These hang down on stalks 30 cm long. The flower heads are up to 8 cm long. The fruit are pods which hang down in clusters. They are dark brown to purple. They are 30-60 cm long and 2 cm wide with their stalk. The pod is narrowed slightly between the seeds. The seeds are red brown in a dry mealy pulp. The pulp is yellow. The pulp is edible.

HABITAT

A tropical and subtropical tree of lowland rainforests. It grows in Africa in forests near streams. It occurs in subhumid and humid places with a rainfall between 950 and 1750 mm annually. It grows between 250-1,500 m above sea level. It can grow in arid places.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seed. To extract the seed the pod is crushed then the seed removed from the pulp. Before sowing the seed they should be boiled briefly then alowed to cool and soaked for 12 hours.

Harvesting and Seed Production

In Tanzania mature fruit are collected from January to April.

NOTES

26% protein in seeds. Rich in calcium, Also as Mimosaceae.

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