PLANT FACT SHEET

Cardiospermum halicacabum L.

GENUS *Cardiospermum* **FAMILY** Sapindaceae

COMMON NAMES Heart seed, Heart pea

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Seeds, Fruit, Stems, Tea

The leaves and young shoots are eaten as greens.
The fruit pulp is used as the base for a drink.
An edible oil can be obtained from the seeds.
The ripe fruit are eaten raw.

DESCRIPTION

A straggling vine or climber. It can be an annual or perennial. It has a woody base and tendrils. It grows 3-5 m long. The stems are angular and very hairy. The leaves are 15-20 cm long. The leaves have 3 leaflets. The leaflets have 3 lobes which are oval and have coarse teeth. They are light green, thin and hairy. The leaflets are 0.5-2 cm wide. The flowers have 4 white petals. The flowers are borne in groups of 3 or 4. The flowers are 7 cm long. The flowers have a delicate scent. The fruit is a 3 cornered, balloon-like capsule with 6 prominent ribs. They are pale green and become papery when ripe. They are 2-3 cm long. They split to release 1-3 black seeds. The seeds are 5 mm across. They are attached to the centre of a papery wing.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows in rocky areas or on clay pans. It grows in the topics and into the subtropics. It is drought resistant but frost tender. In Nepal it grows up to 1500 m altitude. In Peru it grows between 3,000 to 3,300 m above sea level. It can grow in arid places.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. They germinate easily. It can also be grown from stem cuttings.

NOTES

There are 14 Cardiospermum species. They are tropical.

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