PLANT FACT SHEET

Telfairia pedata (Sm. ex Sims) Hooker

GENUS *Telfairia* **FAMILY** Cucurbitaceae

COMMON NAMES Telfairia nut, African pumpkin, Oyster nut

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds, Leaves, Seeds - oil, Vegetable

The seeds are usually roasted and eaten. They can be eaten raw. They are a substitute for almonds in confectionary.
They can also be pressed for oil, which is edible if the shells have been removed.
The leaves and young shoots are commonly eaten as a pot herb.

DESCRIPTION

A pumpkin family plant. It is a climbing woody vine. It can be 30 m or more long. It has fleshy roots. The leaves are smooth and alternate. They are divided into 5-7 leaflets like fingers on a hand. Male and female flowers are on separate plants. The flowers are purple. The seeds are inside a long gourd like a pumpkin. The seeds are flat and round. They are 4 cm across and 1 cm thick. There can be 500 seeds in a fruit.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It cannot tolerate frost when young. In Malawi it is cultivated at about 1,200 m altitude. It can grow from sea level to 2,000 m altitude.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are easily grown from fresh seed. Seed germinate in a week. The soft ripe fruit falls from the plant and bursts releasing the nuts. There are 100-400 seeds per fruit.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Plants grow vigorously. Fruit are produced in the seventh year. Fruit can be 12 kg each and there can be several fruit per vine.

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