PLANT FACT SHEET

Thunbergia alata Bojer ex Sims

GENUS *Thunbergia* **FAMILY** Acanthaceae

COMMON NAMES Black-eyed-Susan vine

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Vegetable, Seeds - flavouring

The leaves are cooked and eaten as a vegetable.
Caution: The leaves can contain poisonous compounds.
The seeds have been used as flavouring in relishes and chutneys.

DESCRIPTION

An evergreen twining climber. It keeps growing from year to year but is often grown as an annual plant. It grows 2.5 m high but is shorter if grown as an annual. The stems are slender, weak and twining. It winds to the right. The leaves are oval or triangular shaped with teeth along the edge. The are mid green colour. Leaves are 8 cm long with angular lobes at the base of the leaf. The leaf stalks have narrow wings. The flower has a long tube but spreads out at the top. The flowers are produced singly in the axils of the leaves. Many flowers are produced. Flowers are 3-4 cm across. They are usually bright orange-yellow. They can have a chocolate coloured centre. The petals can be white. Fruit are round 2-celled capsules. There can be 1-2 seeds in each cell. The seeds are irregularly ribbed on the back.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It occurs naturally in tropical Africa. It needs a temperature above 7°C. It is damaged by drought and frost. It does best with a well-drained soil and a protected sunny position. In Papua New Guinea it grows from sea level to 1,000 m altitude. It can grow in arid places. In Argentina it rrows from sea level to 1,000 m above sea level. It suits hardiness zones 10-12. In Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It can be grown from seed or cuttings. The seed are sown 6 mm deep. The seedlings can be transplanted. Plants should be spaced 30 cm apart. It is grown as an annual plant in temperate climates.

Harvesting and Seed Production

It is fast growing.

NOTES

There are about 200 Thunbergia species. It is sometimes used as a ground cover in plantations.

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