



PLANT FACT SHEET

Sesamum indicum L.

GENUS *Sesamum* FAMILY Pedaliaceae

COMMON NAMES Sesame, Oil-seed sesame

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

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

The seed are ground and eaten. They are used in soups or fried or boiled. They are used in tahini and hummus. Seeds are eaten in the form of sweetmeats. Roasted seeds are used in pickles. They are also put on bread.

Oil from the seeds is used in cooking and on salads.

The refuse from the seed after the oil has been extracted is boiled in water and made into soup.

The seeds are used in chutney.

The dried leaves are crushed and cooked with dried fish and eaten in curries.

DESCRIPTION

A small upright plant. It is an annual plant. It is erect and much branched. It grows 1-2 m tall. The stem is stout and 4 sided. It is furrowed along its length. It is densely covered with glandular hairs. The leaves are fine and downy. They vary in shape. The lower leaves have long stalks and are spear shaped often with lobes or a toothed edge. The leaf stalks are 3-11 cm long. The leaf blade is 4-20 cm long by 2-10 cm wide. Upper leaves are narrow and oblong. They are 0.5-2.5 cm wide. The flowers are pink and white. They occur in the axils of upper leaves. They occur either on their own or in groups of 2 or 3. They can be white, pink, purplish and with yellow spots and stripes. The fruit can be smooth or rough and there are 2 chambers in the capsule. The fruit are brown or purple. They are oblong and deeply grooved. The seeds are small and oval. They are 3 mm by 1.5 mm and vary in colour from white, yellow, grey, red, brown or black. The fully ripe pods burst open.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It suits the hot dry semi-arid tropics and subtropics. It can tolerate short periods of drought once established. It needs a temperature of 20-24°C in early growth then 27°C for ripening. It grows from sea level to about 1,200 m. It grows in areas with a rainfall from 400 to 1000 mm. Soils need to be well drained. It is very intolerant of water-logging. It cannot stand high humidity. It needs frost free conditions. It needs a dry period for seed drying. It does not like acid soils. In Nepal it grows up to about 2400 m altitude. It grows in open sunny places. It can grow in arid places. It suits hardiness zones 10-12.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. Seed will not germinate below 21°C. Seed are broadcast on well prepared land. Seed are harrowed in using feet or a light harrow. Plants can be thinned or weeded during early growth to produce a better crop. Seeding rates of 9-11 kg/ha are used. Plants are spaced 2-15 cm apart in rows placed at 20-45 cm apart. Some varieties shatter and lose their seeds very easily.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Yields of 340-500 kg/ha are average. Plants reach maturity in 80-180 days. Crops are harvested as the leaves begin to drop. Plants are cut and stooked or dried in racks. The hull is removed by soaking in water overnight, then partly dried and rubbed against a rough surface.

NOTES

The seeds can contain 55% oil. Recently the name *Sesamum orientale* L. has been accepted.

PICTURES



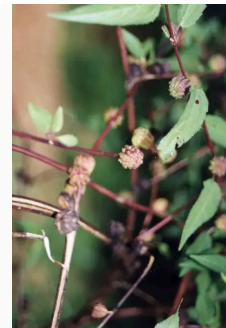
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