PLANT FACT SHEET

Zanthoxylum piperitum (L.) DC.

GENUS *Zanthoxylum* **FAMILY** Rutaceae

COMMON NAMES Japanese Pepper leaf, Sichuan pepper

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds, Berry, Leaves, Bark, Fruit - spice

The leaves give a hot peppery taste. They are dried and powdered and used as a spice. They are also pickled.
The seeds are ground with salt to make a dip.
The flower has a tangy taste. The flowers and immature fruit are pickled or preserved in soy sauce.
The leaves are boiled and eaten with oil and salt.
The seeds are used as a spice or condiment.
The dried fruit hulls are ground and used for flavouring soups, buckwheat noodles and rice dishes.

DESCRIPTION

A shrubby tree. It grows 3-6 m high. It spreads 3 m wide. It has prickles on both the stem and the branches. It loses its leaves during the year. The leaves are clusters 30 cm long divided into 5-11 oval leaflets. The flowers are greenish-yellow. They appear before the leaves. The fruit are small reddish-brown berries. These are 5 mm across. The fruit split when drying to reveal a tiny black seed.

HABITAT

It is a temperate plant. It grows naturally in Szechwan province in SW China. It suits hardiness zones 7-10. Hobart Botanical Gardens.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown by seed. They can also be grown by root cuttings.

Harvesting and Seed Production

The leaves are dried away from sunlight in a warm dry environment.
The berries are dried and then sieved and winnowed. The seeds are removed.

NOTES

There are about 200 Zanthoxylum species. The leaves contain essential oil and saponin.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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