PLANT FACT SHEET

Justicia insularis T. Anderson

GENUS *Justicia* **FAMILY** Acanthaceae

COMMON NAMES Tetu

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Vegetable, Shoots

The young leaves are cooked and eaten. They are also eaten in salads.

DESCRIPTION

A herb. It can grow each year from seed or grow for a few years. The stems are angular. They can be swollen at the base and have aerial roots. The leaves are opposite and clasp the stem. The leaves are simple and can have hairs. The leaves are narrowly oval and there can be round teeth along the edge. The flowers are in the axils of leaves or at the ends of the plant. They are in a congested groups with a few flowers and are red or occasionally white. The fruit is an oval capsule. It is yellow to brown. The plant varies a lot.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It can be in moist forest or dry savannah. It is best in humus rich soil and slight shade. It can grow in arid places.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seed or cuttings. The seeds usually remain dormant in the dry season and grow with the first rains. As seed scatter when the fruit splits open it is difficult to save seeds. It is therefore best to collect almost ripe heads and dry them. Stem cuttings about 15 cm long are used. Root cuttings from near the base of the plant are good.

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