PLANT FACT SHEET

Gnetum africanum Welw.

GENUS *Gnetum* **FAMILY** Gnetaceae

COMMON NAMES Eru, African jointfir

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Seeds, Fruit, Nuts, Vegetable

The young leaves are eaten raw or cooked and are also used in sauces. The leaves can be tough and can be softened with leaves such as Talinum. The leaves can be shredded and dried and stored for later use.
The seeds and fruit are eaten. They can be stored for 8 months or longer.

DESCRIPTION

A woody climber. It can be 10 m long. The branches are thickened at the nodes. It is an evergreen plant. Plants are separately male and female. The leaf stalks are 1 cm long. The leaves are narrowly oval and opposite. They are simple. They taper to a short tip. They are 10-13 cm long by 4-5 cm wide. The male flowering shoot has male flowers close together and evenly spaced. The female flowering shoots have 2-3 flowers at each node and are 2 mm long. The seeds are fleshing and 10-15 mm long by 4-8 mm wide They have a fleshy envelope around them that turned orange or red when ripe.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It grows in the rain-forest in West Africa. It can be found from sea level to 1,200 m above sea level. It grows in areas with a rainfall of about 3,000 mm. It needs shade to grow well.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Seeds are hard to get to grow. Germination can take 12 months. Leafy stem cuttings can be used.

Harvesting and Seed Production

It is possible to harvest leaves 2-3 times per year. Vines should preferably not be damaged in the process. Plants probably can last 10 years.

NOTES

There are about 28-35 Gnetum species.
It is a significant source of protein (16.5% dry wt.) carbohydrates (70.6% dry wt.), essential amino acids (isoleucine, leucine, lysine, methionine, phenylalanine, threonine, tryptophan and valine), non essential amino acids (aspartic acid, serine, glutamic acid, proline,glycine, alanine, cysteine, tyrosine histidine and arginine) and mineral constituents i.e. macro and micro-elements (7.0% dry wt.).

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