PLANT FACT SHEET

Actinidia chinensis Planch.

GENUS *Actinidia* **FAMILY** Actinidiaceae

COMMON NAMES Chinese gooseberry

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Leaves, Vegetable, Flowers

The fruit is eaten raw. It can also be used in preserves and cooking.
The leaves can be eaten cooked as an emergency food.
The fruit is also made into jams and jellies.

DESCRIPTION

A hardy climbing shrub that loses all its leaves at one time. It climbs up to 10 m by twining around its support. The leaves are heart shaped and up to 20 cm long. Male and female flowers are on separate plants. The flowers have a sweet scent. The fruit is up to 8 cm long and 3 cm across and mostly covered with fine hairs. The inside flesh is green. This plant is the parent of Kiwifruit which are now listed as Actinidia deliciosa. The smooth skinned kind is now kept as Actinidia chinensis and the hairy one as Actinidia deliciosa.

HABITAT

It is a temperate plant. Young shoots and fruit are damaged by frost. Plants have fruited at 1000 m altitude in equatorial regions. It grows naturally in China in thickets and oak forests on slopes or in ravines between 200-2300 metres altitude. It cannot tolerate wet soils. It needs shelter from wind and frost. It has a winter chilling requirement of 500-800 hours below 7°C. Fruit are smaller in shade. In Hobart Botanical gardens. It suits hardiness zones 7-10. In Sichuan and Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It can be grown from seeds or cuttings but often plants of known quality and sex are grafted on. It needs a support to climb over. It needs regular pruning because fruit develop on the current year's growth. Plants or grafted branches of both sexes are needed. Male and female plants must be grown if seed is required. Plants can be grown from seed. Fresh seed germinates in 2 - 3 months at 10°C and stored seed can take longer. Seedlings should be transplanted out when 30 cm tall and after the last frosts. (Most seedlings are male.)

Harvesting and Seed Production

Healthy plants can remain productive for 60 years.

NOTES

Fresh fruits contain 100 - 420 mg vitamin C per 100 g and 8 - 14% carbohydrates. There are 40-60 Actinidia species. The Actinidiaceae are a mainly tropical family.

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