



PLANT FACT SHEET



Use with caution

This plant can be harmful if it is eaten raw, in large amounts or without the right preparation. Read the whole fact sheet before use.

Mucuna pruriens (L.) DC.

GENUS *Mucuna* FAMILY Fabaceae

COMMON NAMES Velvet bean

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds, Young pods, Fruit, Leaves, Flowers, Vegetable, Roots

The pods are burnt over a fire to remove the prickles then the beans are soaked until they sprout and then washed and boiled or pounded.

The young leaves are cooked as a vegetable. The flowers are eaten as a potherb.

The ripe seeds are roasted and eaten.

Caution: The seeds need special preparation.

DESCRIPTION

An evergreen herb of shrub. It is a climbing vine. It climbs to 6 m high. It can re-grow each year or live for a few years. The stems are slender with long, slender branches. They are very hairy when young. The leaves are alternate with sword shaped leaves. The leaf stalks are hairy. There are 3 leaflets. The leaflets are 5-19 cm long and 4-16 cm wide. The leaflets are rounded at the base and the side leaflets are unequal in shape. The flowers are large and white with bluish butterfly shaped petals. They occur in clusters of 2 or 3. The flowers are 2-4 cm long. The fruit are thick, leathery pods covered with hairs. They are 10 cm long and contain 4-6 seeds. The pods are dark brown.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It does best in a rich, moist, well-drained soil. It needs a protected, sunny position. It is damaged by drought and frost. It grows from sea level to 900 m above sea level. In Nepal it grows at 1,300 m above sea level. They need a temperature above 8°C. It can grow in arid places. In Sichuan and Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. The seed need treatment to assist them to germinate.

NOTES

There are about 100 *Mucuna* species. They grow in tropical places. Chemical composition (seeds - dry weight basis): Moisture g/100g) = 7.29. Ash = 3.87. Fat (ether extractive) = 8.96. Protein (crude) (N x 6.25) = 29.32. Ether extractives = 9.0. Nitrogen free extract = 53.7. Fibre (crude) = 4.1. Total ash = 3.9. Calcium (mg/100g) = 218. Phosphorus (mg/100g) = 159. Iron (mg/100g) = 13.52. Niacin (mg/100g) = 3.64. Ascorbic acid (mg/100g) = 4.78. Amino acids: Histidine = 2.8. Lysine = 1.7. Methionine = 0.3. Cysteine = - . Phenylalanine = 1.3. Tyrosine = 0.63. Phenylalanine = 1.93. Isoleucine = 7.5. Valine = 2.9. Threonine = 1.3. T.p. = 1.3. *Mucuna pruriens* seeds contain L-dopa, the compound used in treatment of Parkinson's disease.

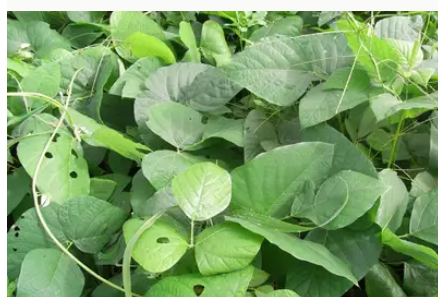
PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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