PLANT FACT SHEET

# *Phyllanthus reticulatus* Poir.

**GENUS** *Phyllanthus* **FAMILY** Phyllanthaceae

**COMMON NAMES** Potato bush

## EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

**Edible parts:** Fruit, Leaves

The ripe fruit are eaten raw. They are also cooked.
It is claimed the fruit are poisonous.
The leaves are cooked in soup.

## DESCRIPTION

A shrub with many branches. Sometimes it is scrambling or a twiggy tree. It can be 2-8 m high and spread 1.5-3 m wide. The branches hang over. The leaves are oval and 2.5 cm long by 1.5 cm wide. They are arranged to look like a compound leaf. The veins under the leaf are red and net-like. The flowers are very small and in the axils of leaves. They are clustered on short slender branches. Male and female flowers occur together in clusters in the axils of leaves. The fruit is berry-like and reddish but black when mature. They are 4-6 mm across. The seeds are reddish.

## HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows in tropical Africa and Asia. It grows in low altitude forest near rivers. In Nepal it grows up to about 800 m altitude. In tropical Australia it grows from sea level to 950 m altitude. In Pakistan it grows in lowland areas, often near the sea and in areas subject to flooding. In Zimbabwe it grows in hot, dry deciduous woodland between 610-1,370 m above sea level. It can grow in arid places.

## PRODUCTION

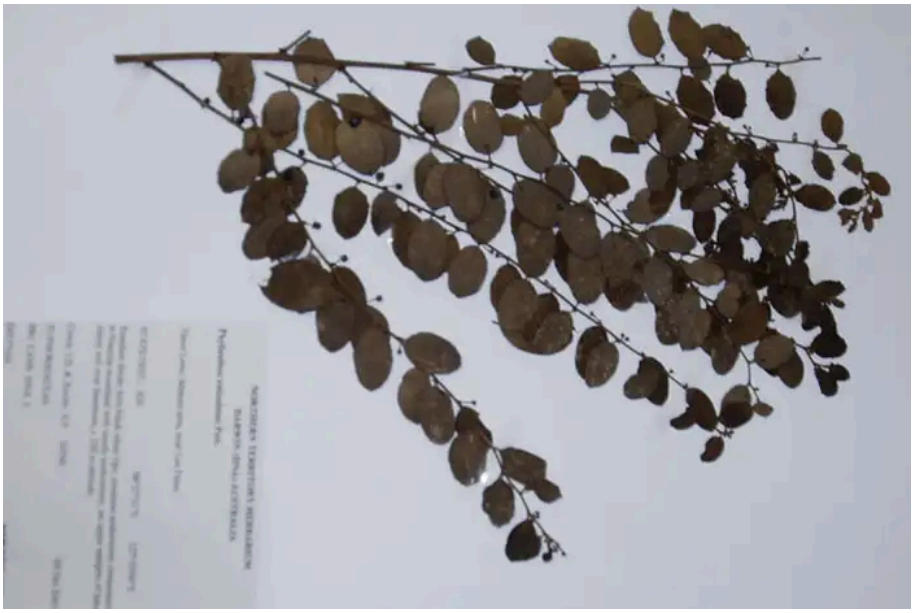
### Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. They can also be grown from cuttings of firm young growth.

## NOTES

There are about 750 Phyllanthus species. They are mostly in the tropics. Also put in the family Euphorbiaceae.

## PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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