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.

Acokanthera schimperi (A. DC.) Schweinf.

GENUS *Acokanthera* **FAMILY** Apocynaceae

COMMON NAMES Poison arrow tree, Rough-leaved poison-bush

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit

The ripe fruit are eaten raw. They are also used for jams. The fruit are also dried and pickled.
The whole plant is poisonous so care should be taken.
Caution: The unripe fruit are poisonous.

DESCRIPTION

A shrub or rounded tree. It grows up to 5-10 m tall. The bark is dark brown and becomes cracked with age. The young twigs are flattened. The leaves occur opposite each other along the branch. They are dark green and shiny on the top surface. They are stiff and leathery. They are rounded and 4-7 cm long. The tip is pointed and sharp. The flowers are whitish pink and almost without stalks. They occur in dense clusters. They have a sweet smell. The fruit are red berries about 2 cm across. They become purple when ripe. They have many seeds. They are edible.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It grows in Africa. It grows in dry woodland. In equatorial regions is occurs from 1,000 to 2,300 m above sea level. It does best in well drained forest soils but will grow on poorer soils. It is mostly in hill country. It can grow in arid places. It grows in areas with a rainfall between 500-900 mm. It suits hardiness zones 9-11.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

They are grown from seed. Seed do no always germinate evenly. There are 400-450 seeds per kg. The seed do not store well.

Harvesting and Seed Production

It grows at a medium rate. Fruit are collected April to July.

NOTES

There are 5-7 Acokanthera species.

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