PLANT FACT SHEET

Deeringia amaranthoides (Lamk.) Merr.

GENUS *Deeringia* **FAMILY** Amaranthaceae

COMMON NAMES Shrubby deeringia

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Seeds

The young leaves are cooked and eaten as a vegetable.
CAUTION This plant is suspected of poisoning cattle. (Often cattle forget to cook their food!!)
The young leaves can be stored for 3-4 days.

DESCRIPTION

A small shrub or climber up to 5 m tall. The stem is woody and it branches. Young shoots are slender and smooth. The leaves are alternate and oval or sword shaped. They are 10 cm long and 2-4 cm wide. They are drawn out to a long point and are bright green with a thin texture. The flowers occur in slender spikes up to 25 cm long. These are in the axils of the upper leaves. Flowers are 0.4 cm across and greenish white. Flowers contain both sexes. Seeds are about 1.2 mm across, smooth and black. They are inside a bright red berry which is carried in clusters on long slender spikes. The fruit are 0.5 cm long with 3 furrows long it.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It occurs in the Sepik, Madang, Morobe and Central Provinces in Papua New Guinea. It is often near forest edges near creeks in the rainforest. It occurs up to 1200 m altitude. This plant is also used as food in Fiji, Indonesia and Taiwan. It needs a well drained humus rich soil. It needs a sheltered position and partial shade. It is drought and frost tender.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It grows wild. Plants are grown from seed. The seed need to be sown fresh. Plants can also be easily grown from cuttings.

NOTES

There are about 6-12 Deeringia species.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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