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.

Crotalaria pallida Aiton

GENUS *Crotalaria* **FAMILY** Fabaceae

COMMON NAMES Broad-leaved rattlepod

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Flowers, Vegetable, Seeds - coffee

The flowers are eaten as a vegetable.
The roasted seeds are used as a coffee substitute.
The seeds are made into a fermented food.
CAUTION: They contain a poisonous alkaloid that needs to be removed during preparation.
It is used as a substrate for fermenting wine.

DESCRIPTION

An annual herb. It grows 1-2 m tall and spreads 0.5-1 m wide. The branches are erect and have silky hairs when young. The leaves have 3 leaflets. The leaf stalks are 3-9 cm long. The leaflets are 5-8 cm long by 2-4 cm wide. They are oblong and grey-green. They have silky hairs underneath. The flowers occur in clusters that are 15-20 cm long. These are at the ends of branches. The flowers are 1-1.5 cm long and golden yellow. They have prominent lines along them. The fruit are pods 2.5-3.5 cm long and narrow.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It grows near the edges of roads. It needs a sunny position. It is best in light to medium, well drained soil. In Zimbabwe it grows up to 1,500 m above sea level. It is resistant to frost and drought. In Sichuan and Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. The seed need to be treated to break the hard seed coat.

NOTES

There are about 550 Crotalaria species. They are mostly tropical.

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