PLANT FACT SHEET

Vaccinium uliginosum L.

GENUS *Vaccinium* **FAMILY** Ericaceae

COMMON NAMES Bog bilberry

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit

The berries are fermented to make an alcoholic drink. Caution: Alcohol is a cause of cancer.
The berries are also used to colour wine.
The fruit are eaten raw occasionally. They are used for jams, jellies and pies. They are also frozen and dried.
CAUTION: Large numbers can cause giddiness and headaches.
The leaves are dried and used for tea drinks.

DESCRIPTION

A small shrub. It has an open sprawling habit and forms loose mats. It grows 30-60 cm tall. It loses its leaves during the winter. The young branches are a yellowish-green and rounded. The leaves are 8-12 mm long and 3-8 mm wide. The leaves have prominent veins underneath. The leaves turn bright red in the autumn. The flowers are pale pink. They can occur singly or in clusters in the axils of leaves. The fruit are large, juicy purple/black berries. They are 5-12 mm across. They are edible.

HABITAT

It is a cold temperate plant. It grows in arctic bogs. It suits moist conditions with sphagnum moss. It suits cold climates. In north China it grows between 900-2,300 m above sea level.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It can be grown by seed or from rooted suckers.

Harvesting and Seed Production

The berries can be beaten off the bush and the leaves winnowed away.

NOTES

They have health benefits.

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