



PLANT FACT SHEET

Vigna unguiculata subsp. sesquipedalis (L.) Verdc.

GENUS *Vigna* FAMILY Fabaceae

COMMON NAMES Yard long bean, Snake bean

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds, Leaves, Pods, Vegetable

Both the young pods and leaves are eaten. They can be steamed, stir-fried and used in other dishes.

The ripe seeds can also be eaten cooked.

The seeds can be sprouted and eaten.

DESCRIPTION

A climbing bean with long pods. The vines can be 3 m long. They normally twine around sticks. Dwarf kinds also occur. Leaves have 3 leaflets. The leaflets are oval and side leaflets are at an angle. Leaflets can be 2-16 cm long by 1-12 cm wide. The centre leaflet can have lobes near the base and the side leaflets can have lobes on the outer edge. The leaf stalks can be 2-13 cm long. The flowering stalks are in the axils of leaves. There can be few or several flowers. The flowers can be white, yellow or blue. Flowers are 1-3 cm long by 1-3 cm wide. Pods are long (up to 90 cm) and flexible. The seeds can vary between white to dark brown. They are oblong or kidney shaped. Seeds are 4-12 mm long by 2-6 mm wide. There are many named cultivated varieties.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. Plants grow in coastal areas in the tropics from sea level up to about 300 m in equatorial regions. In PNG it has been recorded up to 1,800 m above sea level. Seeds germinate in moist soil over 22°C. For growth, day temperatures between 25-35°C and night temperatures not below 15°C are required. It suits wet areas and cannot tolerate drought. Plants are day length neutral. They perform best under full sunlight but can tolerate some shade. It has a high water requirement for the full grown crop (6-8 mm per day). It can tolerate a wide range of soils with pH of 5.5-7.5. Seeds show no dormancy. It suits plant hardiness zones 10-11.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. Seeds germinate quickly (2-3 days) and plants grow rapidly. Flowering occurs after 5 weeks and harvesting of young pods can start 2 weeks later. Plants die after about 3-4 months. A spacing of 60 cm is suitable. Plants need sticks to climb up. Sticks about 2-2.5 m long are suitable. Often 5 or 6 seeds are sown around the one stick. Plants are often topped when growing too vigorously. It only grows as an annual bean so seeds need to be replanted each year. The pods need to be harvested every 2 or 3 days. Diseases get worse if the bean does not have sticks to climb. The damage by bean pod borer is less if snake beans are grown inter-cropped with maize.

NOTES

There are about 150 *Vigna* species. They are mostly in the tropics.
It is high in folates.

PICTURES



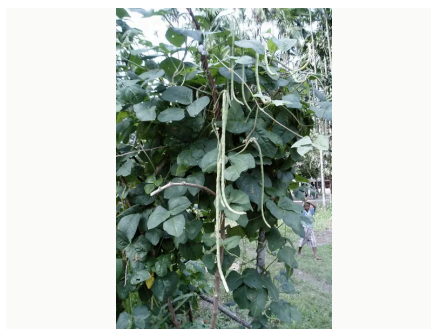
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