PLANT FACT SHEET

Elatostema reticulatum Wedd.

GENUS *Elatostema* **FAMILY** Urticaceae

COMMON NAMES Rainforest Spinach, Soft Nettle

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Stem

The young stems and leaves are eaten raw or cooked.

DESCRIPTION

A fleshy herb. It keeps growing from year to year. It grows 30-60 cm high and spreads 30-45 cm wide. It forms coarse clumps. The stems are 30-60 cm long and bright green. The are fleshy and root at the base. The leaves are 7-15 cm long by 3.5-6 cm wide. The leaves are scattered up the stem. The leaves are soft and bright green. They have teeth along the edge. The leaves are edible. The male flower heads are 1-2.5 cm across and flattened and green. The female flower heads are 0.6-0.8 cm across and rounded and green. The flowers are about 0.2 cm across. The fruit are nuts 0.1 cm long.

HABITAT

A subtropical plant. It can grow with low light levels. It needs to be kept moist. It benefits from adequate fertiliser. It grows from tropical to warm temperate locations. It is damaged by frost or drought.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It is easily grown from cuttings. They can also be grown from seeds. Plants can be cut back and allowed to regrow.

NOTES

There are about 200 Elatostema species.

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