PLANT FACT SHEET

Arracacia xanthorrhiza Bancroft

GENUS *Arracacia* **FAMILY** Apiaceae

COMMON NAMES Peruvian parsnip, Arracacha

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Tuber, Leaves, Vegetable, Root

The roots are boiled and eaten. They can be fried or used in stews.
The roots are also used for starch used in food.
The young blanched stems can be used in salads or as a vegetable.

DESCRIPTION

A stout herb. It grows about 1 m high. The above ground parts are somewhat like celery. The roots are long and like carrots. They have rings around them. There is a coarse central core. This grows 10 cm high. A number of parsnip-like side shoots develop. They look and smell like parsnips. These side roots are 5-25 cm long and 5 cm wide. The stems are coarse and leaves can be 0.6-1.2 m. The leaves are dark green or purple. They are deeply divided. They have long stalks. These are 15-30 cm long and sheath at the base. The flower head occurs at the end of the plant. The flowers are small. They are usually purple or yellow.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It does best with a temperature between 15-20°C throughout the year. It takes longer to grow in cooler places. Higher temperatures seem to reduce root size. It needs a moderate and even rainfall. It needs to be 60 cm or better 100 cm. It needs a deep friable, well drained soil. A pH of 5-5.5 is good. In Colombia it grows between 1800-2600 m altitude. In Peru it grows between 1,000-3,000 m above sea level. It needs short daylength.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It can be grown from seed. Mostly it is grown from offshoots at the crown of the main rootstock. Pieces 2-3 cm long with buds and leaves is used. Some of the leaf area is reduced. The base of the cut end is cut several times to increase sprouting. The offsets are left to dry for 2-3 days before planting. Adding phosphorus normally increases yield, while adding nitrogen normally reduces yield. The offsets are planted so that the base is below ground and the top above ground. Sometimes the whole offset is covered with soil. A spacing of 0.8 m between plants is suitable. 20,000 sets are needed per hectare. Crops are harvested when leaves turn yellow. Harvesting needs to be done as soon as ready or roots become tough and develop a bad flavour.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Tubers take 10-14 months for harvesting. Young roots can sometimes be harvested 4-8 months after planting. Tubers can normally only be stored for 5-7 days. Cold storage allows longer storage. Each plant can produce 6-10 side tubers weighing 2-3 kg. Yields can be 3-10 tonnes per hectare.

NOTES

The starch is easily digestible. There are about 20 Arracacia species.

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