PLANT FACT SHEET

Elephantopus scaber L.

GENUS *Elephantopus* **FAMILY** Asteraceae

COMMON NAMES Elephant's foot

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Root - tea

Leaves are eaten with oil and salt.
The rootstock is sliced, dried, powered and used in a fermented drink. The plant is powdered and used as a cake as a fermenting agent for preparing beers and alcoholic drinks. Caution: Alcohol is a cause of cancer.
The root is also used in soups and stews.

DESCRIPTION

A small herb plant which keeps growing from year to year. It is 30-100 cm high and spreads to 30-60 cm across. It has a creeping rootstock. The stem is stiff and erect. 1-3 stems arise from the base. The stem is densely hairy and warty and is white. The leaves are 10-40 cm long by 1-6 cm wide and oblong. The leaves have a notched edge. The leaves are arranged in a circle near the base. They do not have leaf stalks. There are also some leaves along the stem. These are smaller. The flowers are in compound heads and are yellow or blue. They have leaf like bracts around them. The heads are 2.5 cm across with 20-50 flowers.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It prefers rich, moist, well-drained soils. It needs an open sunny position. It is drought and frost tender. In southern China it grows at about 1,400 m above sea level. In Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed.

NOTES

It can become a troublesome weed in some tropical places. There are about 32 Elephantopus species.
The leaves are boiled and used in medicine in Asia.

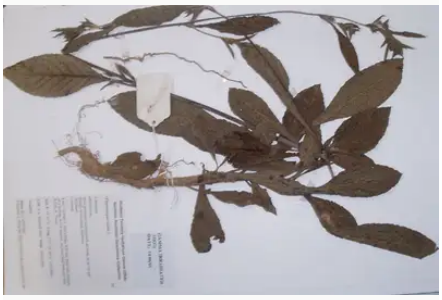
PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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