PLANT FACT SHEET

Vachellia farnesiana (L.) Willd.

GENUS *Vachellia* **FAMILY** Fabaceae

COMMON NAMES Sweet acacia, Cassie flower, Mimosa bush, Needle bush, Prickly Moses

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds, Gum, leaves - condiment, Spice, Vegetable, Pods, Flowers

The green seed are eaten. The germinated seeds are claimed to be eaten.
The young pods have been recorded as eaten after cooking. They are also made into chutney with dried fish.
The gum is eaten. The gum is used to prepare sweets. The ground up seeds are eaten.
Leaves are used for seasoning. The young leaves are used in India as a substitute for tamarind in chutneys.
The flowers are eaten as a vegetable.

DESCRIPTION

An evergreen shrub. It grows to 5-7 m tall and 3 m across. The stem is slender and erect. The crown is open. It is a spreading, densely branched shrub. The bark is smooth and brown. The leaves are branched and green. There are 4-6 pairs of larger leaves and 10-20 pairs of small leaflets. They have tiny leaflets and thorns up to 2 cm long, occur in pairs. The leaf stalk has a gland at or above the middle. The flowers are large orange balls. They are strongly perfumed. (The oil is used as a perfume in France.) The pods are long and dark brown to black. They are 5-8 cm long by 0.5-1 cm wide. They are inflated and sausage like. Often they are curved. They are marked with narrow lines. The pods have hard grey seeds imbedded in a pithy substance. The pods do not split open at maturity. The seeds are chestnut brown and 7-8 mm long by 5.5 mm wide.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. This tree occurs naturally in Australia, Asia and Africa. It will grow on most soils. It is drought and frost resistant. It most commonly grows naturally on clay soils. It grows between 50-1,200 m above sea level. In Papua New Guinea the plants are coastal below 60 m altitude. It grows in areas with an annual rainfall between 400-4,000 mm. It can grow in acid or alkaline soils. It can grow in arid places. It is moderately salt tolerant. It suits hardiness zones 11-12. In Sichuan and Yunnan. It grows on atolls.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It is grown from seed. They can also be grown from shoots near the base.

Harvesting and Seed Production

It is fast growing. Flowering can occur almost continuously if watering is regular. In northern Australia flowering is normally May to July with pods from September to November.

NOTES

There are about 1,350 Acacia species. Over 1,000 occur in Australia. This one can become invasive. Also as Mimosaceae.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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