PLANT FACT SHEET

Use with caution

This plant can be harmful if it is eaten raw, in large amounts or without the right preparation. Read the whole fact sheet before use.

Maerua decumbens (Brogn.) De Wolf

GENUS *Maerua* **FAMILY** Capparaceae

COMMON NAMES Blue bush-cherry

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Seeds, root, Bark - tea

The ripe fruit are sucked and are sweet.
The seeds are boiled for 3-4 hours with the water being changed 4-6 times and are then eaten. Alternatively the seeds are soaked for 2 days then rinsed and cooked.
The roots are added to water to make it sweet then used as a drink. The root is pounded and used in soup.
The root bark is chewed for its sweet taste.
Caution: Many plants in this group need careful preparation.

DESCRIPTION

A small shrub. It grows 3 m high. It often has several stems. It has a tuberous rootstock. The leaves are alternate and simple. The leaves are broadly oval and greyish-green. They are rough. The flowers are usually white or greenish-yellow. They are produced singly in the axils of the upper leaves. The fruit are oval and 3 cm long. They are on long stalks. The fruit are yellow or orange when ripe. They contain 1-4 seeds

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It grows in dry bushland and on sandy or light clay soils. It grows in low rainfall woodlands. It grows at low altitude. It grows in hot dry arid places. In Tanzania it grows from sea level to 1,800 m above sea level.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It can re-grow quickly from woody rootstocks.

Harvesting and Seed Production

In Tanzania fruit are collected from January to March.

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