PLANT FACT SHEET

Gymnanthemum coloratum (Willd.) H. Rob. & B. Kahn

GENUS *Gymnanthemum* **FAMILY** Asteraceae

COMMON NAMES Star-flowered tree vernonia

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Vegetable

The leaves are used to make a drink. The water is changed several times to reduce bitterness.

DESCRIPTION

An erect shrub or small tree. It grows up to 5 m high. The bark is pale brown. It is rough when old. The small branches are green and dotted with lenticels. The leaves are oval and 13 cm long by 6.5 cm wide. They are dark green and harshly hairy above. They are paler green and have velvety hairs underneath. The edges can have fine teeth and it is wavy. The leaf stalk is 3 cm long. The flowers are in thistle like heads. Individual flowers are 10 mm long and shaped like an urn. They are mauve when young but fade to white. They are in dense heads 1.5 cm across. The heads join to form a branched panicle. The fruit are small nuts 2-3 mm long. They have slight ridges.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It occurs at low altitudes in open woodland in Southern Africa. They are sensitive to frost. It can grow in arid places. It grows along the edges of mangroves.

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