PLANT FACT SHEET

Vicia sativa L.

GENUS *Vicia* **FAMILY** Fabaceae

COMMON NAMES Common Vetch, Lentil of Canada, Winter tares

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds, Shoots, Pods, Leaves - tea, Stem

Young leaves, pods and shoots are eaten cooked. They are eaten in soups.
The seeds are eaten cooked. They can be ground into flour and mixed with flour from corn, rye or wheat and made into bread. The young unripe seeds are eaten raw as a snack. Also the pods.
The leaves are used as a tea substitute.
CAUTION: There is some evidence that the seeds may be slightly poisonous.

DESCRIPTION

A straggling annual herb. It is 10-70 cm long. The stems can be hairy. The leaflets are 2-12 and vary in shape. They are 0.3-4 cm long by 0.2-1.5 cm wide. They often have a projecting sharp tip. They are wedge-shaped at the base. There is a branched tendril at the end of the upper leaves. The flower is pea like and the standard is pale blue. Flowers are 2-2.5 cm long. The fruits are pods 4-5.7 cm long and 6-8 mm wide. There are 8-10 seeds. The seeds are 4-5 mm across.

HABITAT

A temperate or Mediterranean climate plant. It grows in the highlands in the tropics. It does not suit acid soils or shady positions. It needs a well-drained but moist soil. In China it grows from sea level to 3,700 m above sea level. Tasmania Herbarium. In Sichuan and Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

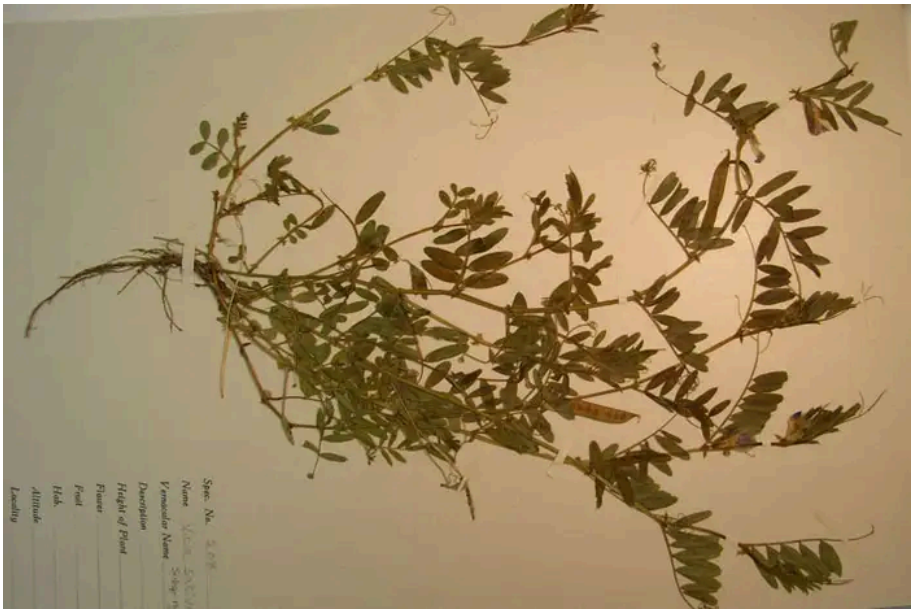
Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. They should be pre-soaked for 24 hours before sowing then sown directly where they are to grow.

NOTES

There are about 140 Vicia species. They are mostly temperate.

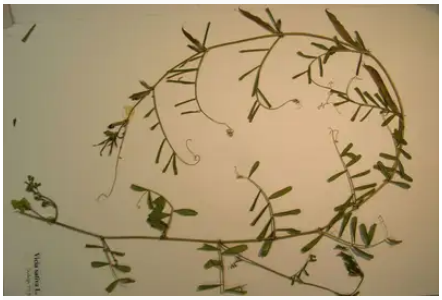
PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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