



PLANT FACT SHEET

Sesbania grandiflora (L.) Persoon

GENUS *Sesbania* FAMILY Fabaceae

COMMON NAMES Sesbania, Corkwood tree

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Flowers, Leaves, Young pods, Bark, Vegetable

CAUTION: The seeds are toxic. They are fermented and used.

The leaves and flowers are used as a vegetable. The young pods are also eaten. The young leaves are stripped from the stalks and lightly boiled or steamed or served as a vegetable in curries.

The white flowers that are eaten contain a considerable amount of sugar and iron and are said to taste like mushrooms. Flowers of the red-flowered variety are bitter and hence, it is only used as an ornamental.

The flowers are boiled, fried or used in curries, soups and stews.

The bark is broiled for soup.

DESCRIPTION

A shrub or small tree up to 5-10 m tall. The trunk has rough bark and the branches often droop. The trunk is thick. The branches are hairy when young. The leaves are made up of 41 to 61 leaflets. These are narrow and oblong. They are 2.5-4 cm long by 0.5-1.4 cm wide. They have a sharp point at the tip. The flowers are large and white to red. The flower petals can be 5-10 cm long. They are produced as 2-4 flowers on flowering branches 2-5 cm long. It has long narrow pods with up to 30-50 small brownish seeds. The seeds with their stalk can be 2.5-4.5 cm long in pods 20-25 cm long by 7-9 mm wide.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows in tropical and subtropical climates. It grows in places with an average rainfall of 900-1200 mm and a temperature range of 17-25°C minimum and 25-37°C maximum. It is cultivated in coastal towns. It does well in both dry and moist areas. It probably grows up to about 1500 m altitude in tropical places. It does best in rich moist soils. It needs a sunny location. It is damaged by frost. It can grow in arid places. It suits hardiness zones 10-12. In Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Trees are grown from seed. The seed often need seed treatment to break the hard seed coat. Seeds germinate best with temperatures above 19°C. It can be grown from cuttings. It fixes nitrogen.

Harvesting and Seed Production

It is a quick growing tree. Trees flower in their second year. It is short lived.

A tree can provide 6-9 kg of leaves per year. The leaves can be harvested 120-150 days after sowing. Repeat harvests can be made each 30 days.

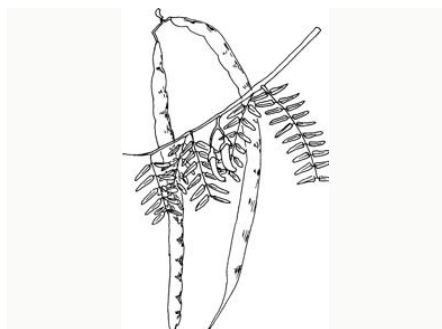
NOTES

The leaves are rich in proVitamin A. . They are also rich in iodine. It has 9.5 mg per 100 g dry weight and 5.5 mg fresh weight of alpha-tocopherol (Vitamin E).

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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