PLANT FACT SHEET

Boscia albitrunca (Burch.) Gilg. et Benedict

GENUS *Boscia* **FAMILY** Capparaceae

COMMON NAMES Shepherd's tree, Caper bush, White-stemmed Boscia

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Roots, Seeds, bud, Leaves, Coffee

The fruit are eaten raw. They are also used for juice.
The roots are boiled and made into syrup. The baked roots have been used for coffee. The dried crushed roots are used for porridge.
Flower buds are pickled and used as capers.
The seeds are edible.
The leaves are eaten raw as a famine food.

DESCRIPTION

The appearance of the tree varies in different places. It is a tree. It can be 3-4.5 m tall. The trunk is long and clean. It is white. The crown is neat and dense. In other places the trunks may be dark the the leaves drooping. It can also be a low many stemmed shrub. The leaves are grey-green. They are hard when mature. They are usually 2.5-5 cm long and narrow. They taper at the base and have short thin stalks. The midrib is prominent under the leaf. Mostly the leaves grow in bunches of 4-5 together. The flowers are small and star shaped. They are yellow and have a sweet smell. They are usually on old wood and in the axils of leaves. The fruit is round and smooth. It is usually green then turns light brown. It is acrid and edible.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It tends to grow in hot places with low rainfall. It is hardy and drought resistant. It grows in places with a rainfall of less than 50 mm per year. It can tolerate frost. It grows between 5-1,850 m above sea level. It can grow in arid places. It is often on termite mounds.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It grows easily from seed. Seeds are collected from ripe fruit off the tree and then dried in a shady place after all the flesh is removed. Seeds germinate in 7-14 days. Seedlings are then transplanted directly into open ground. It can also be grown from shoot or root cuttings. It can be cut back and will re-grow.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Trees grow quickly in moist soil.

NOTES

There are 37 Boscia species.

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PROVIDED BY **Food Plants International**

French, B.R. & Maynard, A.R. Food Plants International Database. Food Plants International

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