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.

Sarcostemma viminale (L.) R. Br.

GENUS *Sarcostemma* **FAMILY** Apocynaceae

COMMON NAMES Caustic vine, Milkbush, Milk rope

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Stems, Roots, Fruit, Flowers, Vegetable

CAUTION: Parts of the plant may be toxic. They can contain oxalates and are less bitter in the afternoon than the morning. The stems also contain steroids.
The fruit are eaten raw. The stems and fruit are also used for flavourings.
The young stem is eaten raw and used in salads. It is succulent and is chewed.
The stem and latex is used to make a drink and a milk substitute.
The root tuber is eaten.

DESCRIPTION

A climbing vine or shrub which keeps growing from year to year. It can be 1.5 m tall. The leaves are like small scales. The stems are grey-green and smooth. They are jointed and succulent. They contain milky sap. The flowers are star-shaped and waxy. They are cream coloured and are in clusters in the axils of the stems. The fruit are narrow cylindrical pods. These split along their length. The seeds have silky hairs and are flat. There are many seeds.

Check Cynanchum viminale.

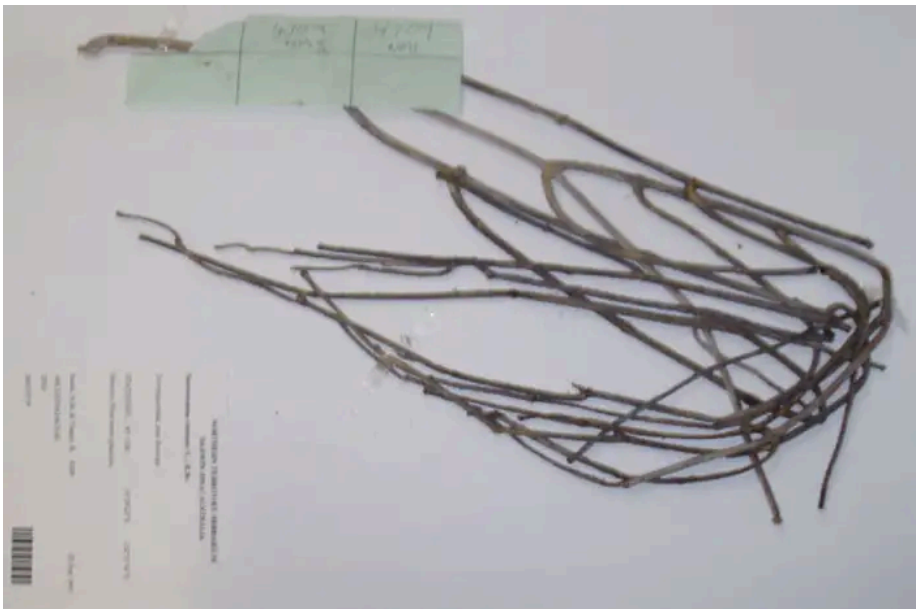
HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows in stony areas. It grows from tropical to warm temperate places. In West Africa it grows in dry savannah and Sahel areas. It grows in hot arid places with a marked dry season. It grows in well-drained sands. In southern Africa it grows between 50-1,800 m altitude. It can grow in arid places.

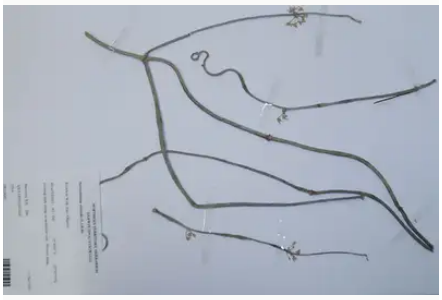
NOTES

It is used in medicine. Several Sarcostemma have been changed to Cynanchum.

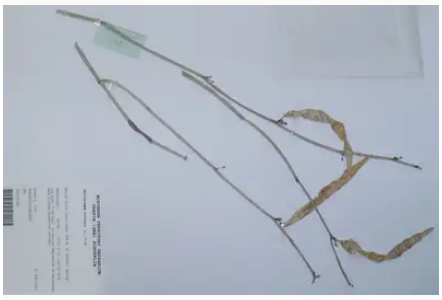
PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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