PLANT FACT SHEET

Securidaca longipendunculata Fresen.

GENUS *Securidaca* **FAMILY** Polygalaceae

COMMON NAMES Tree-violet, Violet tree

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Flowers

The young leaves are eaten.
The flowers are cooked to make sauce.
They are also used to make an alcoholic drink. Caution: Alcohol is a cause of cancer.
CAUTION: The roots are very poisonous.

DESCRIPTION

A small tree. It grows up to 6-10 m high. The trunk is twisted. The bark is light grey and smooth. The leaves are alternate or clustered on small side branches. They are simple and vary in size and shape. They are oval. They are 1-5 cm long by 0.5-2 cm wide. The flowers are small. They are 10 mm long. They are pink or purple. They are on long stalks. They occur in sprays at the ends of branches or in the axils of leaves. The sprays are 3-5 cm long. The flowers have a strong smell. The fruit are a more or less round nut. It has a wing around it. The fruit is purplish-green when young and pale brown when mature. They are 12 mm across with a wing 5 cm long and 2.5 cm across.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. In South Africa it grows from sea level to 1600 m altitude. It grows in various types of bushland. It grows in savannah country. It is often in sandy or rocky soils in moist savannah. It can grow on the edges of mangroves. It grows in areas with an annual rainfall between 600-1,000 mm. It can tolerate drought. It can grow in arid places. It grows in the Sahel.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Seeds do not germinate easily. They should be soaked in water before planting. Seedlings do not transplant well due to a deep taproot. It is best to sow seeds directly where they are to grow.

Harvesting and Seed Production

The tree is slow growing.

NOTES

There are about 80 Securidaca species. It is used in traditional medicine. The roots are poisonous and used for this purpose.

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