PLANT FACT SHEET

Podophyllum hexandrum (Royle) T. S. Ying

GENUS *Podophyllum* **FAMILY** Berberidaceae

COMMON NAMES Himalayan May apple, Chinese may-apple

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit

The ripe fruits are sweet and eaten fresh.
CAUTION: The roots and leaves are poisonous.

DESCRIPTION

A small herb which grows 45 cm tall. It keeps growing from year to year. It has creeping rhizomes or underground stems. They are 8-10 cm long and 5-8 mm thick. Shoots arise from this with two shiny leaves. These leaves hang down at first but then expand and are held horizontally. The leaves are deeply lobed and rounded. The stem is fleshy and cylinder shaped and 20-30 cm long by 5-8 mm across. There are 2 leaves and a flower at the end. The leaves are simple, round and 6-15 cm long by 10-25 cm wide and have 3-5 lobes. They are are green and blotched. There is a single flower with white petals. It is cup shaped. The fruit is 2-4 cm long by 1.5-2.5 cm wide. The fruit is oval and red. It is like a small tree tomato. There are many seeds. It is edible.

HABITAT

It is a cool temperate plant. It needs to grow in shade. It grows in Yunnan in China. It grows between 2,200-4,300 m above sea level. It suits hardiness zones 4-6. In Sichuan.

PRODUCTION

Harvesting and Seed Production

In Sikkim fruit are available June to July.

NOTES

There are 7-11 Podophyllum species. Most are in Asia.
The rhizome has a toxic element useful in the treatment of cancer. This is putting the plant at risk due to over harvesting.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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