PLANT FACT SHEET

Berberis vulgaris L.

GENUS *Berberis* **FAMILY** Berberidaceae

COMMON NAMES Common Barberry, European barberry

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Herb, Root - spice, Leaves, Flowers

CAUTION: Plants in this group are slightly poisonous.
The fruit are tart but rich in Vitamin C and used for jelly, jam and sweets. Also for drinks. They are also dried.
The young leaves are eaten raw in salads or as seasoning for meats.
The fruit are used to flavour rice dishes in Afghan cooking. They are also used in soups.
The flowers are eaten as a snack.

DESCRIPTION

A shrub. It loses its leaves during winter. It grows about 2.5-3.5 m tall. It has several stems. It has spines. The spines are grouped in threes. The leaves and flowers grow on short side shoots in the axils of the spines. The leaves are dark green above and pale green underneath. They are alternate and 2.5-5 cm long. The flowers are yellow and occur in hanging clusters. They are 6 mm across. The fruit are red berries. They are 1.25 cm long. They contain 2-3 small seeds. They are edible.

HABITAT

It grows in temperate places. It can grow in full sun or light shade. It is not tolerant of salt spray. They will grow in a range of soils. They are cold hardy. It suits hardiness zones 3-9.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It can be grown from fresh seed. Stored seed probably need cold stratification for 2-3 months before sowing. Plants can be grown from semi-ripe cuttings with a heel. Suckers can be removed and planted. Young stems can be encouraged to root by layering

Harvesting and Seed Production

Dried ripe barberries are about 10 mm long.

NOTES

There are about 450-500 Berberis species. It is an alternate host for wheat rust.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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