PLANT FACT SHEET

Berchemia zeyheri (Sond.) Grubov.

GENUS *Berchemia* **FAMILY** Rhamnaceae

COMMON NAMES Pink ivory, Red ivory

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit

The fruit are eaten raw.
The fruit are collected and stored in baskets where they form a solid brown sugary mass.
They are dried and ground and used with grains for porridge.
They can be used for jam, juice and sweets.

DESCRIPTION

A bushy tree. It can grow up to 12 m tall. The trunk can be 36 cm across. The crown is round and leafy. The leaves are simple and opposite. They are 2.5-4 cm long. They are bright green when young and grey-green when mature. The flowers are small and pale green. They can occur singly or in small groups on long slender stalks in the axils of leaves. The fruit are smooth. They are oval and 0.6-1.3 cm long. They are widest at the base and pointed. They are green but turn yellow or red when mature. There is a thin layer of flesh around a 2 seeded kernel. They are edible.

HABITAT

A tropical and subtropical plant. It grows on stony hillsides. It grows at medium and low altitudes in South Africa. It is drought resistant. It can only tolerate light frosts. It can grow in arid places.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from fresh seed. Ripe fruit are collected from a tree and the flesh removed then the seeds planted. Seeds germinate in 5-9 days. Seedlings can be transplanted at the 2 leaf stage.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Growth is slow.

NOTES

There are 12 Berchemia species.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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