PLANT FACT SHEET

Nelumbo nucifera Gaertner

GENUS *Nelumbo* **FAMILY** Nelumbonaceae

COMMON NAMES Lotus root, Indian lotus

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds, Root, Tuber, Leaves, Stamens, Rhizomes, Seeds - coffee, Vegetable, Fruit, Flowers, Tea

The seeds are eaten raw or roasted. Ripe seeds are prepared by removing the seedcoat and the intensely bitter plumule and then boiled in syrup. Slightly unripe seeds are also eaten raw. The seeds can be used as a coffee substitute.
The white roots or rhizomes are eaten raw with meat. They can also be boiled, pickled, stir-fried or preserved in sugar. It is also the source of starch.
The flower stalks are cooked as a vegetable. They are also eaten raw. The young tender leaves are eaten with a savoury sauce. The dry leaves are used to wrap food and impart flavour.
The pollen and stamen are used for flavouring tea.

DESCRIPTION

A herb which grows in water and continues growing for several years. The rootstock is under water and creeping. The leaf stalk grows 1-2 m high. The leaves can be 20-90 cm across. It has large round leaves which stand out of the water. The stalk joins to the centre of the leaf. It has large attractive pink, red or white flowers which stand out of the water on long stalks. Flowers are pink or white and 15 to 25 cm across. The flower stalk can be longer than the leaf stalk. The mature fruit is a spongy cone shaped structure with several seeds about 1 cm across under the holes in the top. These fruit can be 7-15 cm long. The edible rhizome is submerge in mud.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant but will grow in cooler places. It needs 20-30°C. It needs full sunshine. It can grow in deep water. It does best in fresh water. The pH can range from 5.6-7.5. It grows in wetlands. It is common in some parts of the Philippines such as Laguna de bay. It is also reported from Camarines, Mindoro, Cotabato and Davao. It will probably grow up to about 1000 m altitude. It occurs in the Fly and Sepik River areas in Papua New Guinea. It is cultivated in most of China except the very northern areas. It can grow in arid places. It suits hardiness zones 9-12. In XTBG Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It can be grown from sections of the root or from seed. Seed germinate between 25-30°C. The hard seed coat needs to be cracked to enable seed to grow. Seed will remain viable for many years. Plants grown from seed vary as seed do not breed true. It needs to be in water at least 30-50 cm deep. Rhizomes with 2-3 segments are

used. They are put in the mud at a 30° angle.

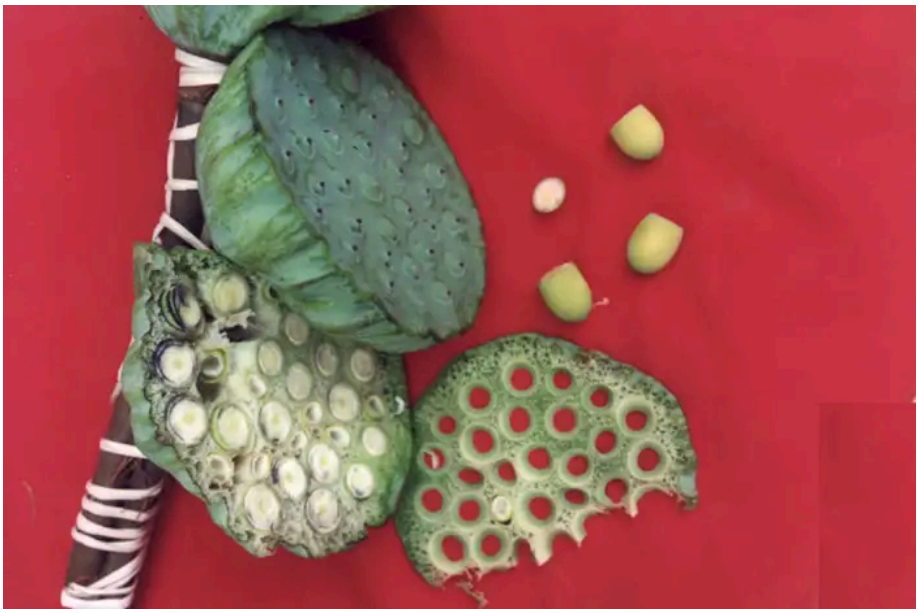
Harvesting and Seed Production

Plants grow quickly. Rhizomes are harvested all year round and contain an abundance of starch. Plants grown from seed take 2 years to produce. Plants grown from cuttings can produce the same year.

NOTES

There are 2 Nelumbo species. This one is native to Asia and Australia.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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