PLANT FACT SHEET

Dodonaea viscosa (L.) Jacq.

GENUS *Dodonaea* **FAMILY** Sapindaceae

COMMON NAMES Sticky hop-bush, Common sand olive

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds, Fruit, Leaves

The seeds have been used as a flavouring.
The bitter fruit have been used as a substitute for hops and yeast in making beer.
The leaves have been chewed as a stimulant but as they can cause cancer and contain saponins which are poisonous but poorly absorbed, this is probably not a good idea.

DESCRIPTION

A shrub or small tree. It can be 10 m high. It can have many stems. The leaves are sticky and are 3-10 cm long. They are narrow with wavy edges. A variety with purple leaves also occurs. The flowers are greenish. Male and female flowers occur on separate plants. The fruit are hops 18 mm long and with wings. They occur in clusters at the ends of branches. They can be red or white. Many different kinds or subspecies of this plant occur. The seed is edible.

HABITAT

They suit tropical and warm places. They often grow on rocky, stony or sandy soil. Plants are damaged by frost. In Tasmania it grows near the East Coast. It can grow in semi arid places as well as on the edges of evergreen forest in high rainfall areas. In East Africa it grows from sea level to 2,700 m altitude. It needs a temperature above 3-5°C. It can grow in arid places. It is highly salt tolerant. In Argentina it grows from sea level to 2,800 m above sea level. It suits hardiness zones 9-11. Melbourne Botanical gardens. Tasmania Herbarium. In Sichuan and Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. Seed germinate in 3 weeks but they can be slow to germinate. They need a temperature above 18°C. Seeds can be soaked in water at 65°C for 4 minutes and then in cool water for 24 hours. Plants can be pruned often and make a good hedge in windy places. Male and female plants must be grown if seed is required. Plants can be grown from cuttings of half ripe wood. Plants need to be transplanted when small or sown directly where they are to grow.

Harvesting and Seed Production

It is fast growing.

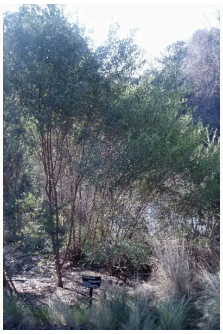
NOTES

There are about 70 Dodonea species. They are mostly in Australia.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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