PLANT FACT SHEET

Vitex madiensis Oliv.

GENUS *Vitex* **FAMILY** Lamiaceae

COMMON NAMES Rough-leaved vitex

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Leaves - tea, Bark

The fruit are eaten raw or cooked. Fruit can be dried and stored.
The leaves are used as a tea substitute.

DESCRIPTION

A woody herb or shrub. It grows to 2 m tall. It spreads to about 1 m across. This grows from a large underground rootstock. In the savannah it grows to 4-7 m high. The stems can be dark red-purple with dense red brown hairs but become smooth with age. The leaves usually have 1-3 leaflets. These have a fragrant smell when crushed. Normally 3 leaves arise together. They are fairly stiff leaves. The shape of the leaves varies but they can be 25 cm long. The edge of the leaves has teeth and the tip of the leaflets is pointed. The longest leaflet stalk is about 3 cm long. The main leaf stalk is 5-15 cm long. The flowers have a scent. They occur in loose heads on a stalk 4-12 cm long. Each tiny flower is pink-white with violet-blue lobes. There are hairs on the flower stalk. The fruit is oblong and about 2.5 cm long by 1-2 cm across. They are shiny green with white spots. The fruit become black on ripening. They contain 3 seeds. The outer case of the flower bud forms a toothed cup around the base of the fruit. The fruit are edible.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows in drier regions in Africa. It grows in grassland, open woodland and forest. It can grow in arid places.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. Seed is sown directly where it is to grow. Seed is collected from ripe fruit by drying then shalin off the dry flesh. It can be cut back and will re-grow.

NOTES

Also put in the family Verbenaceae.

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