PLANT FACT SHEET

Ximenia caffra Sonder

GENUS *Ximenia* **FAMILY** Olacaceae

COMMON NAMES Large sourplum, Blue sour plum

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit

The fruit are eaten ripe either raw and fresh or dried. The flavour is best when the fruit are over-ripe.
They can be used for jelly and marmalade. They are used for drinks and in porridge.
The seeds are eaten.

DESCRIPTION

A shrub or small tree It grows to 8 m tall. It has many spines. Young stems can be very hairy. The bark is grey or brown. It is smooth at first but then becomes rough and cracked along its length. The young twigs are covered with fine red hairs. The leaves are simple and alternate. They vary in shape. They are 2.5-6 cm long and 2 cm wide. They are densely hairy at first. They become shiny green and smooth with age. The leaves narrow to the base and are on short leaf stalks. The lower leaf surface is more pale than the upper surface. The leaves tend to fold inwards. The flowers develop as long green buds in the axils of the leaves. These open to 4 petalled green, hairy flowers. The flowers are either on their own or in a bunch from the same point. They are small and white. They have a sweet scent and are 1.3 cm long. The fruit are oval and 2.5-3 cm long. They are greenish when young and become bright red when ripe. They are edible. The contain one woody seed. (The large leaves, fewer spines, more solitary flowers and red fruit help distinguish this plant from the variety americana.) Probably now Ximenia afra Sond.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows on rocky woodlands from 5 m to 2,000 m above sea level. It suits dry areas. It can tolerate drought. It can grow in arid places.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seed or suckers. To collect seed fruit are collected when soft then left to dry in the sun before removing the seed. Seed are best sown fresh. Seed germinate quickly and easily. Seed lose their viability after 3 months.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Plants are slow growing. They can be topped or pruned. Plants will regrow when cut back.

NOTES

It forms a good fence. There are about 10 Ximenia species. They are tropical.

Probably now Ximenia afra Sond.

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