PLANT FACT SHEET

Persicaria lapathifolia (L.) Delarbe

GENUS *Persicaria* **FAMILY** Polygonaceae

COMMON NAMES Pale Smartweed, Pale Knotweed

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Seeds, Root

CAUTION: It can damage the skin and is suspected of causing death in cattle. (Often animals forget to cook their food!)
The shoots are scalded and then fried with butter, cream, flour or eggs.
The seeds can be ground and used to thicken soups.
The leaves are slightly sour and chewed as a snack. The roots must be cooked.

DESCRIPTION

An erect herb. It can grow for one year or for several years. It can lie along the ground or be erect. It grows to 1 m high. The stems are slender. They can be 2.4 cm across. The leaves are sword shaped and 12 cm long. They can be 25 cm long by 5 cm wide but are mostly smaller. There can be hairs along the larger veins on the upper surface of the leaf. The base is narrowly wedge shaped and they taper to the tip. The flower arrangement is at the top. The false spikes are like cylinders. They are dense. The fruit are flattened and flask shaped. It has flat faces with round edges. They are 2 mm long. They are black or brown and shiny.

HABITAT

It is a temperate and subtropical plant. It grows in wet areas above 1500 m altitude in Papua New Guinea. It grows in wetlands. It grows in Inner Mongolia in China. In Argentina it grows from sea level to 1,000 m above sea level. In Sichuan and Yunnan.

NOTES

It can irritate the skin. There are about 50 Polygonum species.

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