



PLANT FACT SHEET

Sesbania rostrata Brem. & Obermeyer

GENUS *Sesbania* FAMILY Fabaceae

COMMON NAMES Rostrate sesbania

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds - flavouring, Flowers, Leaves

The flower is eaten raw.

DESCRIPTION

An annual herb. It grows 1.5 m high. It is softly woody. It can live for a few years. The stems are 15 mm thick. The leaves have 12-22 pairs of leaflets along the stalk. These are 3 cm long and 6 mm wide. There are 3-15 flowers in a group. They are yellow. The fruit is a curved pod 15-22 cm long. It has a slender beak. The seeds are oval and 4 mm long by 3 mm wide. They are brown with small purple dots.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It appears in the rainy season along roadsides in West Africa. It grows in wet and muddy places along flood plains. It can grow in water up to 1 m deep for a time. It grows between 500-1,200 m above sea level. It can grow in soils with a pH between 5.5 to slightly alkaline. It grows best with temperatures above 25°C.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seeds or cuttings. Cuttings grow most quickly and cuttings 30 cm long are suitable. The seeds can have a hard seed coat so need to be put in hot water (80°C) for 5 minutes. Alternatively the seed coat can be scratched. Plants can be cut back and allowed to re-grow. It can be grown amongst corn. Seeds are produced when the daylength is less than 11 hours. The bacteria to form nodules is *Azorhizobium caulinodans*. When these are present it fixes large amounts of nitrogen. They could be collected from old plants with nodules that are red inside.

NOTES

It is used as a green cover crop in rice paddies. It is a trap crop for insects in soybean crops.

REFERENCES

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Busson, 1965, (As *Sesbania pachycarpa*)

Peters, C. R., O'Brien, E. M., and Drummond, R.B., 1992, Edible Wild plants of Sub-saharan Africa. Kew. p 137 (As *Sesbania pachycarpa*)
Rodin, 1985, (As *Sesbania pachycarpa*)

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