PLANT FACT SHEET

Boehmeria nivea (L.) Gaudichaud-Beaupre

GENUS *Boehmeria* **FAMILY** Urticaceae

COMMON NAMES Ramie

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Root, Leaves, Seeds - oil, Flowers, Stem

The roots are eaten after boiling and peeling.
Oil extracted from the seeds is used for cooking.
The leaves are cooked and eaten. They are also used as a dye to make black rice cake.

DESCRIPTION

An erect shrub which grows from year to year. It is 1-3 m tall. The underground roots are thick storage roots. The leaves occur one after another along opposite sides of the stem. The leaves have long leaf stalks and are oval but broad. They have teeth along the edge. They are 7.5-15 cm long by 5-10 cm wide. The leaves are white underneath. The more tropical form does not have hairs under the leaf. The flowers are small. They occur in the axils of leaves. The flowers have separate sexes. The male flowers are lower down and the female flowers higher up. The fruit is a small dry one seeded fruit. It is brownish-yellow and about 1 mm long. Flowers are wind pollinated.

HABITAT

A tropical and subtropical plant. The plant grows best in warm moist climates. It needs rich well drained soil. It can grow in part shade. It grows on the edges of forests between 200-1,700 m above sea level. Melbourne Botanical gardens. In Sichuan and Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It can be grown from seed. It is more commonly grown from cuttings of the rhizome. Sections 15-25 cm long are planted at a depth of 5-8 cm. Suckers and stem cuttings can also be used.

NOTES

The plant is often grown for the fibres. There are about 100 Boehmeria species. They grow in the tropics and subtropics. It is used in medicine.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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