PLANT FACT SHEET

Polyscias verticillata B. C. Stone

GENUS *Polyscias* **FAMILY** Araliaceae

COMMON NAMES Valanguar

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Vegetable

The young leaves are cooked and eaten.
The young leaves have a nice smell and are used as a vegetable as well as to flavour stews.

DESCRIPTION

A shrub grown as a hedge and of which the young leaves are eaten. It grows up to 7 m high. The leaves are arranged in spirals towards the ends. The leaves can be 1 m long. The leaves are twice divided. The leaf stalk is 24-30 cm long. The leaf sheaths form a flat section clasping the leaf stalk. Leaf shapes, colours and size vary between species and varieties. The leaf blades are oblong and often more broad near the base. The midrib and side veins are visible. The leaf blades are 16-27 cm by 5-13 cm. The flowering stalks are large and at the ends of the branches. The flower stalks branch and radiate out. The fruit are round and fleshy and black. The leaves are like Polyscias macgillivrayi but the flower arrangement is different.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It occurs in coastal areas and probably up to 1000 m altitude. It is mostly planted around houses. It occurs at Madang, Manus, New Britain and New Ireland in Papua New Guinea. Usually it is near the sea level and below 140 m altitude.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown by cuttings. They are often used as an ornamental hedge. This plant is often used to form a hedge around their houses and gardens. Constantly picking the leaves helps maintain it as a small pruned shrub. As a shrub they grow from 2 to 5 m tall. Seeds are produced and spread by birds. These self sown seedlings are sometimes replanted.

NOTES

There are about 100 Polyscias species.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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