PLANT FACT SHEET

Urena lobata L.

GENUS *Urena* **FAMILY** Malvaceae

COMMON NAMES Congo jute

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Seeds, Flowers, Vegetable, Seeds - oil, Leaves - tea

The leaves are eaten as a vegetable. They can be dried and used as an adulterant of patchouli leaves.
The seeds can be eaten raw. They are also used in soups or porridge.
The flowers are eaten raw.

DESCRIPTION

An evergreen shrub or herb. It grows from seed each year. It grows to 2 m high and spreads to 2 m across. The stem is erect, coarse and hairy. It has an open crown. The bark is stringy. Leaves are green and have 3-5 lobes. They are soft, hairy on both sides and 4-8 cm long by 2-8 cm wide. Underneath the leaf is white with prominent veins. The edges of the leaves are finely toothed. Leaves occur at the tops of branches. The leaf stalks are hairy. Flowers occur singly and have petals united forming a tube. Flowers are pink or can be violet with yellow in the middle. The petals are soft. Flowers are 1-4 cm across. The fruit is a rough, spiny, woody, capsule. It is about 1 cm across. It has 5 cells each with one seed. The seed are wedge shaped and 3 mm long. They have a dull surface and are dark brown. There are named varieties.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It will grow in most soils and under many conditions. It is damaged by frost and drought. In Papua New Guinea it mostly grows at low altitudes but occurs to 1500 m altitude. It can grow in arid places. In Sichuan and Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seed or cuttings.

NOTES

The plant is used in medicine. There are about 6 Urena species. They grow in the tropics and subtropics.

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French, B.R. & Maynard, A.R. Food Plants International Database. Food Plants International

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