PLANT FACT SHEET

Corchorus aestuans L.

GENUS *Corchorus* **FAMILY** Malvaceae

COMMON NAMES West African mallow

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Root, Vegetable

The leaves are eaten raw or cooked as a potherb.
The unripe fruit are cooked and eaten.
The roots are cooked as a vegetable.

DESCRIPTION

A herb which grows 40-80 cm tall. It spreads over the ground. The stems are reddish and densely hairy. The leaves are sword shaped or oval, and taper towards the tip. The leaf blade is 3-8 cm long by 2-5 cm wide. They are dark green and have teeth around the edge. Often the lowest tooth, near the base of the leaf, is elongated into a bristle. The leaf stalk is 1-4 cm long. The flowers are yellow, and in pairs opposite the leaves. The fruit is a thin capsule 18-30 mm long. It has 2-5 valves and wings along the edge.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows naturally on volcanic ash soils. It grows on damp flats. It can be in savannah woodland. In Nepal it grows between 400-1000 m altitude. In Pakistan it grows from sea level to 2,000 m altitude. It can grow in arid places.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are often self sown from seed.

NOTES

There are about 100 Corchorus species. Also in the family Sparmanniaceae and Tiliaceae

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