PLANT FACT SHEET

Sesamum radiatum K. Schumach. et Thonn.

GENUS *Sesamum* **FAMILY** Pedaliaceae

COMMON NAMES Black beniseed

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

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

The young leaves are finely cut, cooked and eaten with cereals or added to soups. Cooked leaves are slimy.
The seeds are eaten. They are eaten toasted and whole or ground to a paste.
The seeds yield an edible oil.

DESCRIPTION

A hairy herb. It grows each year from seeds. It grows 1 m high. It has an unpleasant smell. The stems can be simple or branched. The leaves are opposite or alternate and simple. They are oval and 3-10 cm long by 2-5 cm wide. They are wedge shaped at the base and taper to the tip. The flowers occur singly in the axils of the leaves. The fruit is a 4 sided long capsule. It is 2-3,5 cm long. It is softly hairy. There are many seeds. The seeds are flattened and 2.5-3.5 mm long. The seed coat has lines going out from the centre.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows in tropical Africa. It grows in open savannah in moist places.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seeds. They can be sown directly or transplanted. Seeds germinate in 6-10 days. Seedlings are transplanted when 15 cm high. Second year plants can be pruned to encourage new growth.

Harvesting and Seed Production

First leaves can be harvested 8-10 weeks after sowing. They are then harvested every 7-10 days. Flowering and fruiting can continue while plants keep growing. Fruits mature in 6 weeks.

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