PLANT FACT SHEET

Ximenia americana L.

GENUS *Ximenia* **FAMILY** Olacaceae

COMMON NAMES Wild olive, Beach plum, Yellow plum

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Leaves, Seeds, Oil, Root bark - tea

The ripe fruit are eaten raw or pickled. They are used for jam and jellies. They can be dried. They are also used to make beer.
The seeds or nuts are powdered and mixed with sago to make bread. Oil is also extracted from the seeds.
The kernels of the nuts are recorded as both edible and purgative. They should only be eaten in small numbers.
CAUTION The leaves have been reported as poisonous. They contain a cyanogenic glycoside.
Young leaves are eaten after cooking.

DESCRIPTION

A small tree or spiny shrub about 3-4 m high. It has spines about 1 cm long which are thin and straight. The leaves and branches are without hairs. The leaves are alternate, oval and about 2-4 cm long. The leaves are bluish green. The leaves fold upwards along the midrib. The tip of the leaf can be round or with a notch. The flowers are greenish white, have a smell and are less than 1 cm long. They occur in small branched clusters with a common stalk. The fruit are yellow, egg shaped and 2 cm across. They are thin skinned. They are sour. There is one large seed.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows in the lowlands. They occur along the back of coasts and seashores from Luzon to Mindanao and Palawan in the Philippines. It occurs in the vegetation near the coastline. The plant occurs in all tropical countries. It is found in savannah in Africa. It is drought resistant. In China it grows in sandy areas behind beaches along the sea shore and mostly below 100 m in S China. In Bolivia it grows up to 900 m altitude. In Kenya it grows between 1,700-1,800 m altitude. In Ethiopia it grows between 500-2,450 m above sea level. It grows in the Sahel. It grows in areas with an annual rainfall between 100-1,270 mm. It can grow in arid places.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants normally grow wild. The plant often has roots which feed off other plants. Plants can be grown from seed. These can be grown in pots then transplanted or can be sown where they are to grow. As seed do not store well, they should be sown fresh.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Plants are slow growing. They can be pruned as a hedge or cut back and allowed to regrow. Plants fruit is 3-4 years. Fruit mature in 50-60 days. Fruit are harvested by climbing the plucking the fruit.

NOTES

The seed contains a non drying oil useful in soaps. There are about 8-10 Ximenia species. They are tropical.

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