PLANT FACT SHEET

Use with caution

This plant can be harmful if it is eaten raw, in large amounts or without the right preparation. Read the whole fact sheet before use.

Gliricidia sepium (Jacq.) Kunth. ex Steud.

GENUS *Gliricidia* **FAMILY** Fabaceae

COMMON NAMES Mother-of-cacao

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Flowers, Vegetable

The leaves have been reported as being eaten. They are used in a fish dish.
The flowers are cooked as potherbs and also folded into an egg batter and fried.
CAUTION: They are also reported as poisonous. Leaves are used to kill rats. As all parts are poisonous it is probably better not to eat any part.

DESCRIPTION

An evergreen shrub or tree. It grows to 10 m high and spreads to 3 m across. The crown is irregular. The bark is grey. The stem is erect and branching. The young branches are hairy. The leaves are compound with 8 to 14 leaflets. These are 7 cm long and 3 cm wide. They come to a blunt tip at the top end and are rounded at the base. The flowers are pink and yellow in the centre with a green stripe. They are pea shaped. The flowers occur in 10 cm long clusters. They are produced on older twigs. The fruit is a woody pod 15 cm long and up to 2 cm wide. The seeds are purplish brown and round. They are 1 cm long and 9 mm wide.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows best in warm, seasonally dry climates. It occurs in areas with 900-1500 mm annual rainfall. It grows between sea level and 1200 m altitude. It suits areas with a mean annual temperature of 20-27°C. It does best with light well composted soil. The soil needs to be well drained. It needs a protected sunny position. It is damaged by drought and frost. It grows with soil pH between 5.0-8.5. It suits hardiness zones 10-12. In XTBG Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. The seed needs treatment to help it to start growing. Plants are easy to grow from large cuttings or mature wood. The cuttings should be 4.7 cm long.

NOTES

There are about 6 Gliricidia species. They grow in tropical America. The seeds are used as rat poison. Also as Papilionaceae.

PICTURES

Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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