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.

# *Dioscorea communis* (L.) Caddick & Wilkin

**GENUS** *Dioscorea* **FAMILY** Dioscoreaceae

**COMMON NAMES** Black bryony, Black bindweed, Mandrake

## EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

**Edible parts:** Leaves, Stems, Tubers, Root, Sprouts

The young leaves and stems are eaten raw or boiled and also used in pickles. They are also cooked with an egg as an omelette. They are usually boiled and then fried and used as a wrapping for sarma.
The shoots are eaten after boiling and changing the water. The young shoots are added to pistic in Italy.
They are stewed and also added to omelettes or salads.
CAUTION: The berries are poisonous. The shoots must be cooked.
The roots can contain calcium oxalate.

## DESCRIPTION

A vine. It is a yam. A tall twining climber. It keeps growing from year to year. It grows 4 m high and dies down to the underground tuber in autumn. The leaves are glossy green and oval or heart shaped. They have long stalks. The edges do not have teeth. There are 3-9 curved primary veins. The flowers are reddish-green. They are 3-6 mm long and in loose branched stalks with flowers developing from the bottom upwards. The male flowers have 6 broad lobes and 6 stamens. The female flowers have small lobes and a distinct ovary. The male and female flowers are on separate plants. The fruit is a round or oval shiny berry. It turns bright red when ripe.

## HABITAT

It is a Mediterranean and temperate plant. It grows in fences and along hedgerows and in open woodland and beside streams.

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