PLANT FACT SHEET

Empetrum nigrum L.

GENUS *Empetrum* **FAMILY** Ericaceae

COMMON NAMES Black Crowberry, Crakeberry

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Twigs - tea

The very ripe fruit are eaten fresh or cooked. The flavour of the berry improves after freezing. They are used in drinks, puddings, pies, jellies and ice cream. They are also made into wine. The fruit are usually only eaten in small quantities.
They can be made into a drink with sour milk.
The twigs are brewed into a tea.

DESCRIPTION

A spreading heath like shrub. It grows 30 cm high. It spreads 38 cm wide. The branches hang down and are trailing. The stems have long woolly hairs. The leaves are short and needle-like. They are 6 mm long. The flowers are small and red and in clusters. The fruit are purple or black. They are 8 mm long. The fruit are edible.

HABITAT

It is a temperate plant. It grows in open peaty soil. It grows in exposed locations in cool temperate regions. They are very cold hardy. They can grow in sun of semi-shade. It is tolerant of salt. It is tolerant of pollution. It suits hardiness zones 3-8.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seed or cuttings. Seed need 4 months of warm treatment then 2-3 months of cold treatment before they will germinate. Semi-ripe cuttings taken during summer will root in 3 weeks. They can also be grown from suckers. Plants need to be 30 cm apart.

NOTES

They are also put in the family Empetraceae.
The juice is rich in Vitamin C.
They have health benefits.

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French, B.R. & Maynard, A.R. Food Plants International Database. Food Plants International

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