PLANT FACT SHEET

Siphonochilus aethiopicus (Schweinf.) B. L. Burtt

GENUS *Siphonochilus* **FAMILY** Zingiberaceae

COMMON NAMES African wild ginger, Mauve ginger

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Rhizome, Root, Tuber, Fruit, Spice, Leaves

The root is used as a spice. It has a ginger flavour.

DESCRIPTION

A herb. It keeps growing from year to year. It has short underground stems. They are 3-5 cm long. It has tuberous roots. These are 3-10 cm long. These give rise to annual stems. It grows 35-70 cm high. The leaves are broad and leathery. They are 17-36 cm long by 2-5 cm wide. The flowers are in spikes at the base of the plant. There are 4-12 flowers in a group. The flowers are red. The fruit are a flattened round shape with 3 lobes. They are almost under the ground. They are 1.5 cm across. The seeds are pale and shiny and 6 mm long by 2 mm wide.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It does best in partial shade in a rich, fertile, moist soil. Bulbs need to remain dry in winter to avoid rotting. It grows as an under-storey herb in tropical savannah and dry forest. It grows between 390-1,830 m above sea level.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seed. Seed may take up to a year to germinate. Plants can be grown by division of the rhizome.

NOTES

There are about 15 Siphonochilus species. They grow in tropical Africa. It is used in medicine.

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