PLANT FACT SHEET

Lycium barbarum L.

GENUS *Lycium* **FAMILY** Solanaceae

COMMON NAMES Chinese boxthorn, Boxthorn, Goji berry

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Leaves, Flowers - pistil

The leaves are used for flavouring.
The dried red fruit are eaten in tonic soups and stew of poultry, meat or turtle.
The leaves and fruit are used for making tea.
The fruit can be eaten fresh or dried for later use. They are used for juice, jams, pies, desserts and sauces.

DESCRIPTION

A deciduous shrub or vine. It can be erect or spreading. It grows 3 m high. The branches are weak and arching. The side branches end in short leafless spines. It forms suckers freely. The leaves are oval and grey-green and taper to the tip. They are 2-5 cm long and 1 cm wide. The flowers are lilac-purple and shaped like tubes. They have 5 petals. The flowers are self fertile, so only one plant is needed to set fruit. They are in clusters of 1 to 4. The fruit are oval and orange red berries. These are 25 mm across.

HABITAT

It is a temperate plant. It is grown as a hedge. It does well in coastal sites and on unstable sandy banks. It is best in full sun. It can with stand cold temperatures. It can also tolerate hot summers. It can grow on a wide range of soils. It cannot tolerate water-logging. It suits hardiness zones 6-10. Tasmania Herbarium.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

They can be grown from seed. Plants can also be grown from young shoot cuttings. The stems can be pegged down and roots allowed to form by layering. These can then be separated and planted. Plants should be spaced 1 m apart. They are best near a fence to scramble over.

Harvesting and Seed Production

It is fast growing. Plants start fruiting in the second year. Plants live for 7-10 years.

NOTES

There are about 100 Lycium species.
It is very high in antioxidants, Vitamin A, amino acids and minerals.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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