PLANT FACT SHEET

Tylosema fassoglensis (Kotschy ex Schweinf.) Torre et Hillcoat

GENUS *Tylosema* **FAMILY** Fabaceae

COMMON NAMES Climbing marama bean, Sprawling bauhinia

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Pods, Fruit, Seeds, Tubers, Root, Stems - gum, Vegetable

The pods are eaten raw or cooked. Young pods are eaten raw.
The seeds can be eaten raw but are usually cooked or roasted. The seeds are also used as a coffee substitute.
The tubers are eaten raw. They also provide water. They can be roasted and eaten or then stored for later use. They can also be crushed and pounded to make a meal.

DESCRIPTION

A trailing or climbing plant. It is evergreen and shrubby. It can be 6 m long. It has a large tuberous root. This can be to a depth of 2.5 m. Young plant parts have rusty coloured hairs. The leaves are simple and almost round but with two lobes or divided at the tip. Leaves are 5-20 cm long by 6-23 cm wide. There are rusty hairs on the veins underneath the leaf. The flower clusters are 2-42 cm long on stalks 2-17 cm long. The flowers have 5 petals. Four of these are yellow and one is reduced to a green stub. The petals are yellow. The outer layer or sepals have wings. Fruit are 7-12 cm long and 4-7 cm wide. The seeds are not quite round and are 1.7-2.8 cm long.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It does well in seasonally wet and dry climates. It needs well-drained soil. In Malawi it grows at 900-1,200 m altitude. In Tanzania it grows up to 1,500 m above sea level and in areas with a rainfall between 1,000-1,600 mm. It needs full sun. It can grow in arid places. It suits hardiness zones 9-12.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seeds.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Plants grow rapidly. Tubers up to 78 kg have been recorded. Seeds are collected at the ends of the rainy season.

NOTES

Also as Caesalpinaceae.

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