PLANT FACT SHEET

Smallanthus sonchifolius (Poepp. & Endl.) H. Rob.

GENUS *Smallanthus* **FAMILY** Asteraceae

COMMON NAMES Yacon

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Tubers, Leaves, Root, Juice, Vegetable

The roots are sweet and often eaten raw. Before this they are left for several days in the sun to allow the skin to shrivel. They can be sliced and added to salads.
The grated pulp can be squeezed through a cloth to make a drink. The juice can be concentrated to blocks of sugar.
They can also be cooked.
The main stem is also eaten as a vegetable. The leaves are also eaten.

DESCRIPTION

A herb. There is an underground stem which lasts from year to year and this produces stems above ground each year. The roots are purple but orange inside. The tall stems above ground are covered with fine hairs. The stems are green in colour and covered with purple spots. The stems can be 1.5 m high. The leaves are opposite, thin and smooth with teeth along the edge. Other stems come from the axils of the lower stems. The yellow or orange flowers are on the ends of these stems. They are composite flowers. The tubers are cylinder shaped and joined together.

HABITAT

It grows in the tropical and subtropical Andes. It is mostly between 900-2,750 m altitude. They can grow up to 3,300 m altitude. It can develop under short and long daylengths. It needs temperatures above 4-5°C. It needs deep rich, well drained soils. In Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from offsets or slips. Sections about 10-20 cm long are taken from the base of the main stem. Often these have roots attached. They are planted throughout the year as long as there is enough moisture. Earth is mounded up once around the plants.

Harvesting and Seed Production

The crop takes 7 months to mature. Tubers will store in a dark place for several months. A tuber can be 200 cm long, 3-10 cm wide and weigh 2 kg.

NOTES

It has high oligofructose content. The leaves contain anti-oxidants.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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