PLANT FACT SHEET

Senna auriculata (L.) Roxb.

GENUS *Senna* **FAMILY** Fabaceae

COMMON NAMES Matara tea, Tanner's cassia

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Pods, Flowers, Bark - drink, Leaves - tea

The tender leaves, flowers and pods are eaten by poor people in India.
The dried flowers are used as a coffee substitute.
The dried leaves are used as tea.
The young pods, leaves and flowers are eaten.
The bark is bruised and allowed to ferment with molasses to make a drink. The bark contains tannins and alkaloids.
Caution:

DESCRIPTION

An evergreen shrub or small tree. It can grow to 7 m high. It has many branches. The branches have short hairs. The leaves are alternate and compound. They have leaflets along the stalk. There are 16-24 leaflets on short stalks. The leaflets slightly overlap. They have a sharp tip. They are more pale underneath. The flowers are large and bright yellow. They are arranged irregularly. They are in groups in the axils of leaves or at the ends of branches. They are 5 cm across on stalks 2.5 cm long. The fruit is a short pod 8-11 cm long by 1.5 cm wide. There are 12-20 seeds each in a separate cavity.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows in dry regions. In East Africa it grows between 150-610 m altitude. It requires full sun and rich light fertile well drained soil. It needs a pH between 5 and 7.7. It grows in regions with a rainfall between 380 and 4300 mm. It needs average temperatures between 16 and 27.5 °C. It is tolerant of drought. It can grow in arid places.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seeds. They are planted 10-15 cm deep and are put 5-13 cm apart. They are then thinned out. It can be cut back and will re-grow. They can also be grown from stem cuttings.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Plants mostly flower in the hot season.

NOTES

There are 100 Cassia species. This group has been revised to a smaller more consistent group. It is used in medicine. Also as Caesalpinaceae.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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