PLANT FACT SHEET

Capparis spinosa Linn.

GENUS *Capparis* **FAMILY** Capparaceae

COMMON NAMES Coastal caper, Caper Bush

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: bud, Fruit, Leaves, Herb, Spice, Vegetable, Seeds - flavouring

The unopened flower buds are pickled in vinegar and used as capers.
The fruit are edible. The unripe fruit are eaten as a vegetable.
The young leaves are extracted in 2 changes of water then the solid mass is cooked and eaten.
Capers are used to garnish pizzas and in sauce.
Young sprouts are eaten.

DESCRIPTION

A small dense shrub. It grows 1-2 m high. The branches are zigzag and spiny. The thorns are straight. The leaves are rounded and thick. They are dull green and 2-4 cm across. They are covered with a white covering. The flowers are in the axils of leaves. The flowers are white. They have 3 petals. They are about 6 cm across. The fruit is a round berry. It is about 3 cm long. It bursts open when ripe.

HABITAT

It is a tropical or Mediterranean plant. It grows along streams and in rocky coastal areas. In Nepal it grows up to 2000 m altitude. In the Indian Himalayas it grows between 3,000-3,700 m above sea level. It suits hardiness zones 9-12.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seed or cuttings.

Harvesting and Seed Production

The capers need to be harvested in the early morning, before sunrise. They are then allowed to wilt for a day. These are then put in salted wine vinegar to pickle.

NOTES

There are about 250 Capparis species. There are about 50 Capparis species in tropical America.

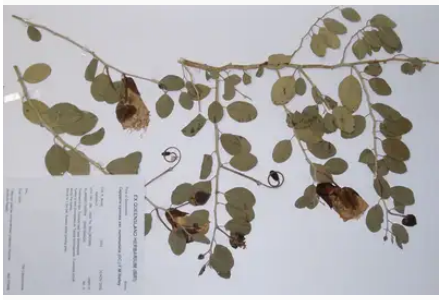
PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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