PLANT FACT SHEET

Olea europaea subsp. cuspidata L., (Wall. ex G. Don) Cif;

GENUS *Olea* **FAMILY** Oleaceae

COMMON NAMES Brown olive, African olive, Indian olive, Wild olive

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit - oil, Stems - tea, Leaves - coffee, Leaves - tea, Flowers

The ripe fruit are eaten raw. They also produce oil. They can be bitter.
The leaves are used as flavouring in drinks. The bark is also pounded and used to flavour drinks.
The leaves are used for tea.

DESCRIPTION

A tree 10-15 m tall. It has a rounded crown and grey-green leaves. The trunk is crooked and it has characteristic pockets. The bark is rough and dark brown. The small branches are white and dotted with breathing pores. The leaves are narrow, oval and pointed. They are in opposite pairs. The underside of the leaves is pale white. The flowers are small and white in branched heads 5 cm across. The fruit is oval and fleshy and 1 cm long. It is purple when ripe. The seed is about 1 cm long.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It occurs in dry forest in East and Southern Africa. It grows between 700 and 3,000 m altitude. It grows in areas with an annual rainfall between 100-1,200 mm. It can grow in alkaline soil. It can tolerate drought. It can grow in arid places. It suits plant hardiness zones 8-11. Melbourne Botanical gardens. It grows in the drier Western Himalayas. It grows up to 2,400 m altitude.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Seeds are produced in low numbers and seeds are slow to germinate. Seedlings are difficult to raise. Seed should be sown fresh and if old seed is used it should be soaked in cold water for 24 hours. Seed can be stored for 2 months.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Plants are slow growing. In NW Pakistan fruit are harvested in September.

NOTES

There are over 40 Olea species. It is used as a rootstock to graft olive on to.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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