PLANT FACT SHEET

Comptonia peregrina (L.) J. M. Coult.

GENUS *Comptonia* **FAMILY** Myricaceae

COMMON NAMES Sweet fern, Meadow Fern

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Leaves, Leaves - tea

The leaves both fresh and dried are used to make tea.
The leaves and tops are chopped and used as a condiment.
Young fruit are eaten.

DESCRIPTION

A small suckering shrub. It loses its leaves during the year. It develops many stems. It grows 1.5 m high and spreads 2.4 m wide. It has feather like leaves which have lobes. The leaves are 5-10 cm long and the lobes are deep. The male and female flowers are on separate catkins. The male ones are slightly longer. They are red-brown. The female catkins enlarge as the seed ripens.

HABITAT

It is a temperate plant. It grows in fields and woodlands. It does best in moist, well-drained soil. It should be rich in humus and slightly acid. It can grow in full sun of light shade. It suits hardiness zones 4-9.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It can be grown from seed, layering or rooted suckers.

NOTES

There is only one Comptonia species. The Myricaceae have nitrogen fixing bacteria (Frankia) in nodules on their roots.

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