PLANT FACT SHEET

Asparagus racemosus Willd.

GENUS *Asparagus* **FAMILY** Asparagaceae

COMMON NAMES Climbing asparagus

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Root, Tubers, Shoots, Fruit, Leaves, Vegetable, Leaves - tea, Flower

The tubers (rhizome) are cooked and eaten. They are boiled and dried. The outer skin is removed and cut into small pieces then pounded. It is also used for pickles.
The young leaves are used as a green vegetable. They are eaten cooked or raw. They are often mixed with other vegetables. They are also used for pickles. The leaves are also fermented and used for tea.
The fruit are eaten as a dessert fruit. The flowering shoots are cooked and eaten as a vegetable.
The harvested shoots can be stored for 10 days.

DESCRIPTION

A creeping or climbing herb or shrub. It has rhizomes or underground runners and forms a tuber. It has woody stems. It grows 2 m high. It spreads 2 m wide. The stems are slender and trailing. The leaves are light green and narrow. They are 5 cm long. The flowers are very small. The fruit are small round red berries.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It grows in thickets in drier parts of West Africa. It is best in rich moist soils and filtered sunlight. It is damaged by frost and drought. It can grow in arid places. It grows in limestone areas. It grows on rocky soils up to 1,400 m above sea level. In the Himalayas in India it grows between 700-2,000 m above sea level.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It can be grown by seed or by division. Seed are best soaked in warm water for 24 hours before sowing. A spacing of 80-90 cm apart is suitable.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Yields can be 5-10 kg of roots per plant.

NOTES

The boiled tuber is claimed to improve milk supply for lactating women.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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