PLANT FACT SHEET

Cassytha capillaris Meissner

GENUS *Cassytha* **FAMILY** Lauraceae

COMMON NAMES Dodder laurel, Berry bush, Slender dodder

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit

The fruit are eaten.
(If they are bitter they are not eaten.)
CAUTION: Some Cassytha have an alkaloid that can cause abortion and should not therefore be eaten by pregnant women.

DESCRIPTION

A plant which keeps growing from year to year by living on other plants. It twines around plants and climbs. It can make some of its own food from carbon dioxide in the air. It attaches to plants by special processes with grow into the plant. The stems are green and become reddish brown when they dry out. They are 0.4-0.5 mm across. If leaves occur they are very small (1 mm) and triangular. Young plants can have hairs but they become hairless. The plant does not have leaves. The flower is a spike. The flowers are white and do not have a flower stalk. The flowers are round and the fruit are pearly pink. They become red when dry. The fruit are 4-6 mm by 3-4 mm. They can be oval or lobed. (It differs from Cassytha filiformis by having a slender almost hairless stem and fruit which are smaller, oval and becoming red when dry.)

HABITAT

A tropical plant. The grow in dry, open, sandy hills. In tropical Queensland it grows from sea level to 600 m altitude. It can grow in arid places.

PRODUCTION

Harvesting and Seed Production

In northern Australia plants flower and fruit from February to June.

NOTES

There are 15-20 Cassytha species. Sometimes they are in the family Cassythaceae.

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