PLANT FACT SHEET

Ilex mitis (L.) Radlk.

GENUS *Ilex* **FAMILY** Aquifoliaceae

COMMON NAMES African holly, Cape holly

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Bark, Roots, Fruit, Leaves - flavouring

The fruit are eaten.
The roots are boiled as a vegetable and eaten.
The twigs are chewed.

DESCRIPTION

A medium to large tree. It grows 10-30 m high. The bark is very pale grey. The young branches are tinged with purple. The leaves are alternate and simple. They are narrowly oval and 7-13 cm long by 1.9-4.5 cm wide. They are shiny dark green. The side veins form loops. The young leaves are reddish. The flowers are white and 7 mm across. They have a sweet scent. They occur in clusters in the axils of leaves. They can be 3 cm long. The sexes are separate on separate trees. The fruit is berry-like and almost round. It is 7 mm across. It develops slowly but becomes bright red. The fruit are edible.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows along river banks. It grows in moist evergreen forest. It grows between 800-2,500 m altitude in Madagascar. It is frost resistant once established. It grows in Miombo woodland in Africa. It suits hardiness zones 8-11.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from fresh seeds. Seeds are collected from the tree and dried in the shade. Seeds germinate in 8-20 days. Seedlings transplant easily.

Harvesting and Seed Production

It is fast growing.

NOTES

There are about 400 Ilex species.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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