PLANT FACT SHEET

Use with caution

This plant can be harmful if it is eaten raw, in large amounts or without the right preparation. Read the whole fact sheet before use.

Kigelia africana (Lam.) Benth.

GENUS *Kigelia* **FAMILY** Bignoniaceae

COMMON NAMES Sausage tree

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds, Fruit, Bark, Flowers

CAUTION: Both the ripe and unripe fruit are poisonous.
The fruit pulp and bark are used for making beer.
The seeds are used as a famine food after baking.
The fruit are used with sugar to make drinks.
The flowers are used in a sauce. They are eaten as a vegetable.
The leaves are used to make a palmnut soup eaten by lactating women.

DESCRIPTION

It is a tree which loses many leaves during the year. It grows 9-18 m high. The crown is rounded. The trunk is short and straight and about 80 cm across. It often branches from the base. The branches spread out and the secondary branches hang down. The bark is dark grey and smooth but flakes off in patches. The leaves are compound leaves growing in threes. They occur at the ends of branches. They are light green. The leaves are divided into leaflets along the stalk with one leaflet at the end. There are 7-9 leaflets. They are smooth on the upper surface and can be downy underneath. The side leaflets do not have stalks. The end leaflet grows out as much as 30 cm from the last pair. The leaflets are rough and hard and up to 10 cm long. They can have a sharp tip. The edge of the leaflet is wavy. The flowers occur on long rope like stalks. These can be 2-3 m long. The flowers are trumpet like. The flowers are on long sprays which hang downwards. The flowers point out and upwards. The petals are bright red with yellow veins. The flowers are 6-8-15 cm long. They have an unpleasant smell. The fruit is like grey green "sausages". These are 30-60 cm long and 10 cm across. The stalk remains hanging on the tree. The seeds are inside the pulp.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It is native to tropical Africa. It grows in warm subtropical and tropical areas. It grows in wet savannah. It is also found naturally along rivers in moist rainforest. It grows in Miombo woodland. It suits humid locations. It occurs between 1,100 and 3,000 metres altitude in Uganda. In Kenya it grows from sea level to

2,200 m altitude and in areas with rainfall between 500-1.500 mm per year. It cannot stand heavy frosts. It can grow in arid places. In Cairns Botanical Gardens. It suits hardiness zones 10-12.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. Seeds germinate poorly and slowly. Plants grow naturally from seeds. Seeds should be sown fresh. It can be grown from large cuttings.

Harvesting and Seed Production

The tree is slow growing in cool places and faster in warm locations. In Central African Republic it flowers in June and September.

NOTES

There is only one Kigelia species. The fruit is used for medicinal purposes. It has anticancer properties. In Slovenia it is probably in a hot house.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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