PLANT FACT SHEET

Guizotia abyssinica (L.f.) Cassini

GENUS *Guizotia* **FAMILY** Asteraceae

COMMON NAMES Niger Seed

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds, Leaves, Seed - oil, Vegetable

The seeds can be fried and used as snacks. They are also used in sauces. They are also used for chutney and pickles.
The seed cake is mixed with honey to make a sweet bread.
The seed oil is edible. It is used in cooking.
The leaves are cooked as a vegetable.

DESCRIPTION

An erect branched herb. It grows 30-180 cm tall. The stems are soft and hairy. The leaves are usually carried opposite one another. The leaves do not have stalks and they clasp the stem. The leaves have teeth along the edge and the surface is a little rough. The flower head is made up of many small flowers each capable of producing a seed. The fruit (called seeds) are black angled structures. They are up to 12 mm long. The seed inside is 3.5-5 mm long. There are about 250-300 seeds per gram.

HABITAT

It is grown in both temperate and tropical zones. It can compete well with weeds. It has some salt tolerance. The temperatures are between 16°C and 20°C where Niger does best. It cannot tolerate temperatures above 28°C average and must have temperatures above 6°C. In Africa it grows between 300 and 2300 m altitude but does best at 1800-2000 m altitude in Ethiopia. The rainfall is 100-1300 mm per year where it grows most. At lower altitudes a lower rainfall is satisfactory if it is spread through the growing season. It grows on a wide range of soils. It can grow on poorly drained soils. It needs short day lengths for flowering. In Nepal it grows between 900-2000 m altitude. It grows in open places. It can grow in arid places. Tasmania Herbarium. In Sichuan and Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It is grown from seed. It is often sown mixed with finger millet. Seeds can be broadcast or planted in rows. 10-15 kg of seed per hectare are used for broadcast crops. When planted in rows 5-8 kg per hecatre of seed are used. Fertilisers do not improve seed yield much. As petals drop, seeds are harvested to avoid seed loss. Stems are cut near the ground, then dried for a few days before threshing.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Flowering occurs 3 months after sowing. Seeds are ready for harvest 4-6 weeks later. It can take 5 months at altitudes over 2000 m. Yields can be 300-700 kg per hectare. Yields of 1400 kg are possible.

NOTES

The seeds have good food value.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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