PLANT FACT SHEET

Rheum x hybridum Murray

GENUS *Rheum* **FAMILY** Polygonaceae

COMMON NAMES Rhubarb

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Stalks, Vegetable

The sour leaf stalks are eaten after cooking with sugar. They are also used in sauces and pies.
CAUTION The leaves are poisonous due to oxalates.

DESCRIPTION

A clumpy plant with broad leaves. They grow to 1.2 m high. It has long leaf stalks which are mostly red in colour. The leaf stalks have a channel on the upper surface. The leaves are large and heart shaped at the base. They have a wavy edge. The roots are thick and clustered. They are woody and underground forming a crown. The stems arise individually from this. The flowers grow in tall dense leafy panicles which branch close to the stem. They can be cream, white or yellow. They can be 3 m high.

HABITAT

It is a temperate plant. It grows between 750 and 2600 m altitude in the tropics. It needs a fertile soil. It needs a sunny location. It suits hardiness zones 6-10.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown by division of the rootstock. Plants can be grown from seed. Seedlings are not easy to transplant. So seed should be sown shallowly and plants thinned to 15-100 cm apart. Flowers should be removed to encourage leaf stalk growth. Leaf stalks can be forced by covering the plant with a container and keeping it warm and dark. Stalks grow more rapidly but the plant is weakened quickly.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Once crowns are well established, leaf stalks are produced very regularly. The leaf stalks are removed regularly. They should be pulled off the crown, not broken or cut off.

NOTES

There are about 50 Rheum species.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

REFERENCES

Ambasta S.P. (Ed.), 2000, The Useful Plants of India. CSIR India. p 520

Arora, R. K., 2014, Diversity in Underutilized Plant Species - An Asia-Pacific Perspective. Bioversity International. p 108

Bianchini, F., Corbetta, F., and Pistoia, M., 1975, Fruits of the Earth. Cassell. p 212

Bourke, R. M., Altitudinal limits of 230 economic crop species in Papua New Guinea. Terra australis 32.

Bremness, L., 1994, Herbs. Collins Eyewitness Handbooks. Harper Collins. p 210 (As Rheum x cultorum)

Cheifetz, A., (ed), 1999, 500 popular vegetables, herbs, fruits and nuts for Australian Gardeners. Random House p 95

Cundall, P., (ed.), 2004, Gardening Australia: flora: the gardener's bible. ABC Books. p 1141 (As Rheum x hybridum)

Esperanca, M. J., 1988. Surviving in the wild. A glance at the wild plants and their uses. Vol. 1. p 371 (As Rheum rhaponticum)

Flowerdew, B., 2000, Complete Fruit Book. Kyle Cathie Ltd., London. p 58

French, B.R., 1986, Food Plants of Papua New Guinea, A Compendium. Asia Pacific Science Foundation p 283

Grubben, G. J. H. and Denton, O. A. (eds), 2004, Plant Resources of Tropical Africa 2. Vegetables. PROTA, Wageningen, Netherlands. p 446

Hadfield, J., 2001, The A-Z of Vegetable Gardening in South Africa. Struik p 121

Hedrick, U.P., 1919, (Ed.), Sturtevant's edible plants of the world. p 556 (As Rheum hybridum)

Henty, E.E., 1980, Harmful Plants in Papua New Guinea. Botany Bulletin No 12. Division Botany, Lae, Papua New Guinea. p 116,

Hibbert, M., 2002, The Aussie Plant Finder 2002, Florilegium. p 246

Jardin, C., 1970, List of Foods Used In Africa, FAO Nutrition Information Document Series No 2.p 97 (As Rheum sp.)

John, L., & Stevenson, V., 1979, The Complete Book of Fruit. Angus & Robertson p 253

Macmillan, H.F. (Revised Barlow, H.S., et al), 1991, Tropical Planting and Gardening. Sixth edition. Malayan Nature Society. Kuala Lumpur. p 369

Marinelli, J. (Ed), 2004, Plant. DK. p 193

Novi Comment. Soc. Regiae Sci. Gott. 2(5):50, t. 11. 1775

Ochse, J. J. et al, 1931, Vegetables of the Dutch East Indies. Asher reprint. p 591

Pham-Hoang Ho, 1999, An Illustrated Flora of Vietnam. Nha Xuat Ban Tre. p 743

Purseglove, J.W., 1968, Tropical Crops Dicotyledons, Longmans. p 641

Smith, P.M., 1979, Rhubarb, in Simmonds, N.W., (ed), Crop Plant Evolution. Longmans. London. p 319

Terra, G.J.A., 1973, Tropical Vegetables. Communication 54e Royal Tropical Institute, Amsterdam, p 70

Tindall, H.D., 1983, Vegetables in the Tropics, Macmillan p 338

Upson, R., & Lewis R., 2014, Updated Vascular Plant Checklist and Atlas for the Falkland Islands. Falklands Conservation and Kew.

USDA, ARS, National Genetic Resources Program. Germplasm Resources Information Network - (GRIN). [Online Database] National Germplasm Resources Laboratory, Beltsville, Maryland. Available: www.ars-grin.gov/cgi-bin/npgs/html/econ.pl (10 April 2000) (As Rheum x hybridum)

PROVIDED BY **Food Plants International**

French, B.R. & Maynard, A.R. Food Plants International Database. Food Plants International

LICENCE CC BY-NC-SA 3.0

ONLINE FACT SHEET https://www.echocommunity.org/en/resources/a1a45c1e-eb80-4561-9d96-dd635017be54