PLANT FACT SHEET

Rumex abyssinicus Jacq.

GENUS *Rumex* **FAMILY** Polygonaceae

COMMON NAMES Spanish Rhubarb, Dock

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Stem, Roots - flavouring, Vegetable, Roots - tea

The leaves are eaten as a vegetable. They are cooked.
The roots are used as a flavouring. They are dried and pounded. The root is also boiled in water and the tea drunk.
The stem is sweet and is chewed.
The dye from the rhizome is used to colour butter and help as a preservative.

DESCRIPTION

A stout herb. It keeps growing from year to year. It grows 4 m tall. The rhizome or underground stem is fleshy. The stem is red-green and grooved. It is 3 cm across. The leaf blade is triangle shape. The leaves at the base are 25 cm long by 20 cm wide. The leaves on the stem are smaller. The group of flowers are 50 cm long. The flowers are in small clusters. The fruit is a sharply triangle shaped nut. It is 2-4 mm long and shiny.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows in tropical equatorial Africa. It is mostly in the highlands. It grows up to 3,300 m altitude. In Tanzania it grows in areas with a rainfall of 1,100-2,200 mm per year.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown by seed or by division of the plant. Removing the flowers increases leaf production.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Leaves are usually collected in the rainy season.

NOTES

There are about 200 Rumex species. There are about 20 in tropical America. All docks are said to be edible.

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

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