PLANT FACT SHEET

Canna indica L.

GENUS *Canna* **FAMILY** Cannaceae

COMMON NAMES Indian shot, Edible canna, Queensland arrowroot

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Root, Rhizome, Tubers, Vegetable, Flowers

The rhizomes are a source of starch.
The rhizomes are eaten after cooking. They are boiled or baked. The leaves and rhizomes are used for animals. Starch can be extracted from the roots. This is achieved by rasping the tubers, then washing the starch out and straining out the fibres. The large starch grains are very digestible.
The starch is used to make transparent noodles.
The young shoots can be eaten as a green vegetable.
Immature seeds are cooked.

DESCRIPTION

A broad leafed plant with purple leaf sheaths. It is about 1.5 to 2.5 m high. It grows as a perennial. The stems are in clusters. The leaves are large and smooth. They are dark green but can be reddish in some varieties. The leaf base forms a sheath around the stem. The flowers are red and produced at the top of the plant. The petals are small and red and 4-10 mm wide. The fruit is a 3 celled capsule with black seeds. Underground it has a much branched root or rhizome with fattened sections covered with leaf scars. These are often light red on the outside and yellowish white inside. A clump of 15-20 suckers often develops. These starchy tubers are from 6 cm across to 15 cm long. The shape varies. The seeds are black and hard. They are 5-7 mm across.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It is grown and used in some of the coastal areas of the tropics and subtropics. It will grow from sea level up to 1600 m. In the Andes it grows between 1,000 and 2,500 m altitude. It needs a heavy fertile soil. It cannot stand strong winds. It does best with an evenly distributed rainfall. It cannot stand waterlogging. It grows in wetlands. It can stand some shade. It needs to be in a frost free location. It has some salt tolerance. It does best where both days and nights are warm. It grows in hardiness zones 8-12. In Sichuan and Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

They can be grown from seed. It is more easy to grow them by dividing the plant. The crowns should not be planted too deeply.
The end section of the rhizome is planted. Well developed tubers with one or two undamaged buds should be used. A spacing of 1 m x 1 m is suitable. Tubers are planted about 15 cm deep and need to be kept weed free

during early growth. About 2.5 tons of tubers are required to plant a hectare. The tubers are dug from between 6 and 19 months. The tubers can be stored if cool and dry. For starch manufacture they need to be processed immediately.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Harvesting occurs after about 8 months. Parts of the underground root are harvested as needed. High yields of tops and rhizomes are possible. Up to 38 tons of rhizomes and 50 tons of tops have been achieved.

NOTES

There are about 10 Canna species. They grow in the tropics and subtropics. They originally came from tropical America.

PICTURES



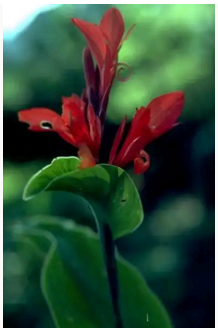
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