PLANT FACT SHEET

Bauhinia macrantha Oliv.

GENUS *Bauhinia* **FAMILY** Fabaceae

COMMON NAMES Wild coffee beans, Camel's foot, Kalahari bauhinia

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds, Roots, Pods

The seeds are used as a coffee substitute.
The seeds are roasted and ground into flour. Young seeds can be roasted in the pods then eaten.
The roasted root can be eaten.
The young pods are boiled and eaten.

DESCRIPTION

It is usually a shrub or semi-climber. It can be a tree 6 m tall. The leaves have 2 lobes and are 1.3-8 cm across. They are velvety with a rounded or notched base. The lobes join for about half the length of the leaf. The veins are 7 from the base and are red-brown. They are prominent underneath. The twigs are hairy. The flowers are large and white. They are 6.5 cm long and have a sweet smell. The pods are long and narrow. They can be 20 cm long by 4 cm wide. They are dark coloured and smooth. There are several shiny brown seeds inside. They are edible.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows in sand in the desert. It is not frost resistant. It thrives in hot, dry climates. It can tolerate extended drought. It needs well-drained soil. It grows between 550-1,800 m above sea level. It grows in areas with a rainfall between 350-1,000 mm per year. It can grow in arid places.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seeds. Seeds germinate fairly easily. The seeds are put in hot water and soaked overnight then planted. They germinate in 7-20 days. Seedlings can be transplanted at the 2 leaf stage. It is important not to damage the taproot. Plants can be cut back and will re-grow.

Harvesting and Seed Production

It takes about 1,500 pods to produce 1 kg of meal.

NOTES

There are about 250-350 Bauhinia species. Most are in the tropics. Also as Caesalpinaceae.

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