PLANT FACT SHEET

Use with caution

This plant can be harmful if it is eaten raw, in large amounts or without the right preparation. Read the whole fact sheet before use.

Maerua pseudopetalosa (Gilg & Benedict) De Wolf

GENUS *Maerua* **FAMILY** Capparaceae

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Seeds, Root, Leaves, Vegetable

The seeds are washed several times to process them and remove poison before eating. The fruit is eaten during times of famine, after soaking in running water for several days, and then boiling in water to which a little soda has been added.
The roots are used to make a sweet drink.
The stems are used for salt. The plant ash from the stems and leaves is used as a spice.

DESCRIPTION

A shrub. It grows up to 60 cm high. It loses its leaves during the year. The leaves are alternate and narrowly oval. They are 3.5 cm long. The fruit is a yellow capsule. It is 2 cm across. It contains 103 seeds.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It grows in dry savannah in flood land. It grows across west and East Africa. It grows in poorly drained sandy loams. It grows between 900-1,400 m above sea level. It can grow in arid places.

NOTES

Chemical composition: the root of this plant contains powerfully toxic tetramethylammonium nitrate - ca. 0.25g of the base taken orally being lethal for adult humans. The kernel of the fruit contains the same toxic element as the root but in lower proportions. The leaching practices described above may reflect local awareness of the toxic properties of the root as well as possible reactions to ingestion of the fruit. The fruit also contains two crystalline, water-soluble, isomeric compounds: cis- and trans-3-Hydroxystachydrine. These compounds form approximately 10% of the dry weight of the husks of the fruit.

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ONLINE FACT SHEET https://www.echocommunity.org/en/resources/b5693649-30bb-4a19-9676-5e3f0d1e106f