PLANT FACT SHEET

Agave parryi Engelm.

GENUS *Agave* **FAMILY** Asparagaceae

COMMON NAMES Century plant, Parry's Agave

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Young shoot, Seeds, Flower stalks, Leaves, Sap

The heart of the plant can be eaten after baking. It is sweet but fibrous.
The seed is ground into flour and used to thicken soups.
The flower stalk can be roasted and used like asparagus.
The young leaves are eaten roasted.
Sap from the cut flowering stems can be used as a syrup.

DESCRIPTION

A perennial plant which grows to 50 cm high and spreads to 1 m wide. The plants have a very sharp and tough spine at the tip of each leaf. The leaves are fattened sword shape and 25 cm long. They are light waxy grey in colour. The plants form flowers after about 20-30 years. The flower buds are reddish and the flowers are yellow. The flower stalk is 5 or more m tall.

HABITAT

It occurs naturally in South-western North America from Arizona to New Mexico in semiarid land between 1300-2400 metres, often experiencing snow in winter with temperatures as low as -18°C for short periods. It suits hardiness zones 7-11. It suits gritty, well drained soils.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seed. Seed should be sown on the surface and germinate in 1-3 months at 20°C. The seedlings should be grown in a sunny position until 20 cm tall. Plants can also be grown from offshoots.

Harvesting and Seed Production

The flower lives for a number of years without flowering but dies once it does flower. Suckers however continue to grow. Suckers flower after 15 years in warm climates. Plants are very slow growing.

NOTES

There are about 250 Agave species. The Agavaceae are mostly in the tropics and subtropics.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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ONLINE FACT SHEET https://www.echocommunity.org/en/resources/b66800ec-b6c6-4dcf-80ff-5fe9dbd4d5c2