PLANT FACT SHEET

Abroma augustum (L) L.f.

GENUS *Abroma* **FAMILY** Malvaceae

COMMON NAMES Perennial Indian hemp, Maria herrania

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Vegetable, Fruit, Seed, Seeds - oil

The leaves have been reported as being eaten in Chimbu in Papua New Guinea and also in Vietnam.
(The roots are used as a medicine)
The seeds are roasted and eaten. They are also used for oil. They are also fermented.
The fruit pulp is eaten raw.

DESCRIPTION

A tall shrub. It is about 3 m high and keeps its leaves all year. It has fibrous bark and hairs which irritate the skin. The plant is shaped like a pyramid. The branches spread downwards. The leaves are heart shaped and are toothed around the edge. The leaf shape varies. Lower leaves tend to have 3 lobes. The leaves are softly hairy. The flowers occur as 1-3 together on stalked hanging clusters like an umbrella. They are red. The fruit is a berry and it bears fruit only once. The fruit is divided by a partition into 5 cavities. The seeds are arranged in a star shape.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It mostly grows in the highlands in the tropics. In North India it grows between 300-1,100 m above sea level. It does well in seasonally moist and dry climates. It is drought tolerant. It needs an average, well-drained soil. It needs an acid pH. It needs full sun. It suits hardiness zones 10-11.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It grows wild. It can be grown from seeds or cuttings of half ripe wood. Seeds germinate in 21-30 days at 24°C.

Harvesting and Seed Production

In Sikkim seeds are available October to January.

NOTES

There is only one Abroma species. They grow in Asia. This one is used for making ropes and strong bags (bilums). It is used in medicine. The leaves have protective effect against diabetes. It has also been put in the family Sterculiaceae.

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