PLANT FACT SHEET

Asparagus africanus Lam.

GENUS *Asparagus* **FAMILY** Asparagaceae

COMMON NAMES Wild asparagus, Bush asparagus

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Shoots, Root, Seed, Fruit

The young shoot tips are eaten. They are dug out, peeled and chewed.
The fleshy root tubers can be eaten after extended cooking.
The fruit are sucked.

DESCRIPTION

An erect shrub. It can be a scrambler or climbing. It grows 1.7 m high. It has wiry spiny branches. It grows each year from a woody base. The leaves are reduced to very small scales. There are clusters or leaf-like needles in the axils of leaves. The flowers are white or greenish-white. They are borne in the axils. The fruit are small red berries. They turn black when old.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It grows in the moist sand of bush savannah in West Africa. In Tanzania it grows up to 2,500 m above sea level in areas with 1,000-1,700 mm rainfall. It becomes common after burning.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown by seeds or root suckers.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Shoots are collected during the rainy season.

NOTES

There are between 160-300 Asparagus species.
The fruit are nutritious.

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