PLANT FACT SHEET

Persicaria vivipara (L.) Ronse Decr.

GENUS *Persicaria* **FAMILY** Polygonaceae

COMMON NAMES Alpine bistort, Alpine smartweed, Common bistort, Serpent grass, Swinegrass

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Root, Seeds, Flavouring, Bulblets, Fruit

The tiny bulbils are stripped from the lower part of the flower stalk and eaten raw.
The rootstocks can be dug and eaten raw, boiled or roasted. They are used to flavour meat.
The young leaves can be used in salads or cooked. Older leaves can be cooked and eaten.
Seeds are pickled. The ripe fruit are eaten.
CAUTION: Although plants are not poisonous they can cause skin reactions.

DESCRIPTION

A herb. It keeps growing from year to year. It grows 5-15 cm tall. The rootstock is often twisted and starchy. It is edible. It grows to 40 cm high. The leaves are 4-10 cm long by 1.3-2.5 cm wide. They are narrow and oblong. The edges curve. The leaves curl downwards at the edges. They are green above and greyish underneath. The leaves at the base have long stalks and the leaves on the stems do not have stalks. The leaves are in a cluster from the rootstock and are dark-green and shiny. The flower stems are 30 cm tall. The flowers are in a slender spike. It forms small bulbils along the flower stalk. These fall off to form new plants. The flowers are white or pink. The flowers are in spikes at the ends of the plant. At the base of the flowers are small bulblets that fall off to produce new plants.

HABITAT

It is a cool temperate plant. It grows in Arctic regions and on alpine and subalpine slopes. It grows on gravelly and rocky soils. It is a hardy plant. In Nepal plants grow between 3000-4500 m altitude. In Sikkim it grows between 1,500-2,500 m above sea level. It suits hardiness zones 5-8. In Sichuan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed.

NOTES

There are about 50 Polygonum species.

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French, B.R. & Maynard, A.R. Food Plants International Database. Food Plants International

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