PLANT FACT SHEET

Pandanus odorifer (Forssk.) Kuntze

GENUS *Pandanus* **FAMILY** Pandanaceae

COMMON NAMES Fragrant screwpine

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Spice, Fruit, Shoot, Seeds, bud

The fleshy base of the fruit is eaten in one kind. The lower part of the fruit is sucked.
The kernels are eaten in some kinds. Kernels are eaten raw or lightly cooked.
The growing shoot can be eaten after thorough washing in salt water.
Drinks are made using the male flower.
CAUTION: The fruit can cause irritation in the mouth when eaten.
The young tender leaves near the flower are eaten raw or cooked. They are used to flavour drinks and desserts.

DESCRIPTION

A screwpine or erect branched shrub 3 to 5 m high. The trunk has several prop roots. The leaves are spirally crowded towards the ends of branches and covered with waxy powder. They are up to 1.5 m long and 3 to 5 cm wide. The edge of the leaf and the midrib have sharp spiny teeth pointing towards the end of the leaf. Trees are of one sex. The male flowers are in loose spike of flowers with a fleshy axis and enclosed by a spathe. These have several 5-10 cm long spikes along them. The female flowers are solitary and 5 cm across. The fruit are alone and hang down. They are rounded and 20 cm long. They are composed of 50 to 75 fibrous fleshy fruit with a stone in the centre. They are somewhat angular with fruit in groups of 6-7 forming a large cluster. There are several forms or kinds which vary in details.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. Plants occur in coastal areas especially just behind the shoreline. They grow along the coasts in India. It grows at Mumbai. It grows in damp soil. It suits hardiness zones 11-12. (This plant is similar to and often confused with Pandanus tectorius which grows in the Pacific and has been taken elsewhere.)

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are normally self sown. They can be grown from seed or suckers.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Trees flower 3-4 years after planting. The strongly scented flavouring essence is distilled from male flowers.

NOTES

There are about 600 Pandanus species. They grow in the tropics.
It possibly has anti-cancer properties. It has 24.65 mg per 100 g dry weight and 13.15 mg fresh weight of alpha-tocopherol (Vitamin E).

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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