PLANT FACT SHEET

Diplazium esculentum (Retz.) Swartz

GENUS *Diplazium* **FAMILY** Athyriaceae

COMMON NAMES Vegetable-fern, Paco fern

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fronds, Leaves, Vegetable

The young fronds are cooked and eaten as a vegetable. They are also used for pickles.
They are also used in stews. They can be fried. They can be steamed in earth ovens. They are cooked with daal.
Very young leaves are also eaten raw in salads.

DESCRIPTION

A large fern with an upright stem. It forms tufts. It is only woody near the base. It can be 1 m high and 1 m wide. It usually grows as a large clump. It spreads by underground runners. They have feather like fronds which are 50 to 80 cm long and divided 2 or 3 times. The leaf stalks are black near the bottom. The secondary leaflets are pointed at the tip. The end sections of the leaf are many, about 8 cm long and 1 cm wide. The leaflets are notched like a saw and about 2 to 5 cm long.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows in moist tropical places. It mostly occurs in coastal areas. It is common in wet areas. It grows along riversides and in wet areas usually with running water. It grows in wetlands. It also occurs in Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines and Fiji and is used as a food there. They are widely distributed in the Philippines on areas of gravel and the banks of streams. Plants are frost tender. In Vietnam it grows up to 2,000 m above sea level. In China it grows between 100-1,200 m above sea level. In Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from spores. They need to be in a well drained potting medium and kept with a high humidity. The spores need a temperature of 21°C and sown as soon as ripe. Plants should be transplanted into a moist well drained soil with partial shade. Plants can also be grown by separating out the underground runners.

Harvesting and Seed Production

The fronds will only store for a very short time so need to be used quickly.

NOTES

There are about 400 Diplazium species. They have also been put in the families Aspleniaceae and Woodsiaceae.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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