PLANT FACT SHEET

Phytolacca octandra L.

GENUS *Phytolacca* **FAMILY** Phytolaccaceae

COMMON NAMES Inkberry, Dye berry

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Shoots, Vegetable, Fruit

CAUTION: It needs to be used when young. It becomes poisonous with age.
The juice of the berries is used to dye wine. The fruit are also eaten as a snack.
The stems and leaves are used as a vegetable.

DESCRIPTION

An erect herb. It grows 2 m high. It has a well developed taproot. The stems are spreading and branching. They are red coloured. The leaves are bright green and 20 cm long. The leaves change from bright green to reddish-purple in autumn. The flowers are pale green or white. They occur close together in upright spikes. The flowers have 8 stamens. The fruit are green berries which become deep purplish-black. Their juice is red-purple.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It does best in a warm climate. In tropical Queensland it grows from 160-1500 m altitude. In Zimbabwe it grows between 1,550-2,100 m above sea level. It often grows along the edges of forests.

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