PLANT FACT SHEET

Psophocarpus scandens (Endl.) Verdc.

GENUS *Psophocarpus* **FAMILY** Fabaceae

COMMON NAMES African winged bean

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Pods, Fruit, Tubers, Root, Vegetable, Seeds

The young leaves and shoots are eaten as a vegetable. They can be dried and stored.
The immature pods and ripe seeds are also cooked and eaten.

DESCRIPTION

A climbing herb. It continues to grow from year to year. It has long stems which can be slightly hairy. The stems can be 1-6 m long. The leaflets are oval or broadly rounded. They are 2.5-12 cm long and 1.8-10 cm wide. They can taper to a point at the tip. They are rounded or wedge shaped at the base. The leaf stalks are 5-18 cm long. The flower cluster is 5-12 cm long. The flower stalk is 3-40 cm long. The flower petals are pale blue. The fruit are long pods 3.5-8 cm long by 6-7 mm wide. They are square in cross section. There are 4-8 seeds inside. The pods have prominent wings which can have slight teeth along the edge. The seeds are blackish purple. They are 5-7.5 mm long and 3.5-6 mm wide.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It is a short day plant. In Africa it grows between sea level and 950 m altitude. It grows in areas with a rainfall of 1,200-1,800 mm per year. The average temperature is 25°C.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. Seed can be stored. Seeds need to have the hard seed coat broken by scratching before planting. Plants can be allowed to climb over fences or shrubs.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Leaves are usually picked before fruit form.

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