PLANT FACT SHEET

Antidesma venosum E. Mey. ex Tul.

GENUS *Antidesma* **FAMILY** Phyllanthaceae

COMMON NAMES Tassel Berry

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Leaves, Seeds

The ripe fruit are eaten fresh, especially by children. The dry shell is removed. The seeds are discarded. The leaves are used to make a drink.

DESCRIPTION

A shrub or small tree. It can grow to 15 m tall. The crown can be round and spreading or drooping. The bark is pale and flaky. The young twigs are covered with red hairs. The leaves are simple, large and without teeth. They can be 2.5-15 cm long and 1.9-10 cm wide. The leaf shape and hairiness varies. There are about 7 pairs of conspicuous veins. The flowers are small and greenish. Male and female flowers occur on separate trees. The fruit is small and with one seed. It is 7 mm long by 5 mm wide. Several occur in a bunch. The fruit are oval and flattened. The colour varies between yellow, pink, red and black and fruit of several colours can occur on one bunch. The fruit are edible.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It occurs in coastal bush. It grows naturally in Central and Southern Africa. It needs to be in a frost free area. It can grow in arid places. It grows in the lowlands. It grows in wet grassland savannah. It grows in Miombo woodland. In Tanzania it grows between sea level to 1,200 m above sea level in areas with a rainfall between 700-2,000 mm.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Both male and female fruit are necessary for fruiting. Plants are grown from seeds. The ripe black fruit are harvested from the tree and dried in the shade then sown. Seeds usually germinate in 10-20 days. Seedlings can be transplanted at the 3 leaf stage. It can be cut back and will re-grow. Plants can be grown from root suckers.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Seedlings grow fairly quickly. Fruit are collected during and after the rainy season.

NOTES

There are about 100-170 Antidesma species.

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