



PLANT FACT SHEET

Terminalia sericea Burch. ex DC.

GENUS *Terminalia* **FAMILY** Combretaceae

COMMON NAMES Silver terminalia

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Gum, Leaves

The tree produces a gum which is eaten.

The leaves are used as a tea substitute.

The leaves are eaten.

DESCRIPTION

A shrub or small tree which loses its leaves during the year. It normally grows 6-9 m tall. It can grow to 23 m tall and have a stem 50 cm across. The trunk is dark and has deep splits along its length. The bark on the twigs is reddish brown due to silky hairs. The branches come out horizontal and droop slightly at the ends. This makes the branches appear to come out in layers. The leaves are clustered near the tips of the small branches. The leaves are grey-green or silver. The leaves are sword shaped and 5-15 cm long by 1.3-2.5 cm wide. They are usually wider above the middle and narrower towards the base. The leaves are on short leaf stalks. The flowers are small and yellow in spikes. They droop and have an unpleasant smell. The fruit are oval and round tipped. They are flat and with one seed. This is usually surrounded by a thin wing. The fruit become pink when ripe.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It is native to South Africa. It grows in the sandy bushveld in Southern Africa. It grows in areas between 300-520 mm per year. It can tolerate frost. It can grow in salty soils. It grows between 45-1,920 m above sea level. It can tolerate drought. It can grow in arid places.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seed. Seed do not germinate easily. It is required to be on a deep sandy soil. It is best to plant the seeds where they are to grow rather than transplant.

Harvesting and Seed Production

It is slow growing.

NOTES

There are about 200-250 *Terminalia* species. They are tropical.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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