PLANT FACT SHEET

Dioscorea trifida L. f.

GENUS *Dioscorea* **FAMILY** Dioscoreaceae

COMMON NAMES Sweet yam, Cush-cush yam

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Tubers, Vegetable, Root

The tubers are cooked and eaten. They can be baked or boiled. They are also mashed and used in soup.

DESCRIPTION

A yam vine. The stem is square in cross section and does not have spines. The leaves are 25 cm long. They are opposite. The leaf is divided like fingers on a hand into 3 or more segments. The male flower is on a long stalk and the female flower stalk is short. It easily produces seed. The underground tuber is irregular in shape. It can be 70 cm long. Varieties can range in colour from white to purple and black.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It is indigenous to Central America. It suits a cooler climate than other yams. It grows in areas with temperatures between 25-30°C. The rainfall is 1,500-2,000 mm per year. It cannot tolerate frost.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Normally small whole tubers are used for planting. Large tubers can be cut into small pieces and planted. Top pieces of the tuber are best. It can be grown from seed in a nursery and the seedlings transplanted.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Plants take 9-10 months to mature. Tubers will store in cool, dry, well-ventilated places for a while. Yields of 15-20 tonnes per hectare have been achieved.

NOTES

There are about 650 species of Dioscorea.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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