PLANT FACT SHEET

Use with caution

This plant can be harmful if it is eaten raw, in large amounts or without the right preparation. Read the whole fact sheet before use.

Acanthosicyos naudinianus (Sonder) C. Jeffrey

GENUS *Acanthosicyos* **FAMILY** Cucurbitaceae

COMMON NAMES Herero cucumber

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Tuber, Root, Seeds, Vegetable

The mature fruit are eaten boiled, roasted or made into pickles.
The fruit are also used as a rennet for curdling milk.
The seeds are roasted and ground into flour. They are used as a confectionary. The seeds can be used to extract oil.
Caution: The roots are considered poisonous. Some fruit can be bitter.

DESCRIPTION

A pumpkin family herb. It is a climber. It has creeping annual leafy stems. The leaf blades have 5 deep lobes. They are narrow and the middle lobe is 4 cm long with 2-3 lobes in each side. The fruit are 5 cm long by 3 cm wide. It has stout conical spines. (The fruit are larger in cultivation.) The seeds are narrowly oval and about 10 mm long by 6 mm wide.

HABITAT

It is a subtropical plant. It grows best in deep sandy soils. In the Kalahari it grows between 900-1,350 m altitude. It cannot tolerate frost. It will grow in salty soils. It can grow in arid places.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants grow naturally from seed.

NOTES

There are 2 Acanthosicyos species. The seeds contain 35% protein.

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