PLANT FACT SHEET

Pereskia aculeata Mill.

GENUS *Pereskia* **FAMILY** Cactaceae

COMMON NAMES Leaf Cactus, Barbados-gooseberry

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Leaves, Seeds, Flowers

The fruit is used fresh or cooked. They have a citrus like flavour. They can be stewed or made into jam or preserves.
The young leaves are used as a vegetable.

DESCRIPTION

A large vine-like cactus. It is a woody climber. It can be 20 m tall. It has hooked spines on the stems. There are 2 forms of spines. The vine can be 9 m long and 5-8 cm wide. It is dark green. The leaves are fleshy. The leaves are oblong or sword shaped. Leaves are shed in the dry period. The flowers are 4 cm across. They are white but become cream or pink with age. They are waxy and lemon scented. The fruit are small and yellow with acid pulp. They are about 2 cm across. The flesh is white. The fruit are edible.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It suits a hot tropical lowland climate. Melbourne Botanical Gardens. It does best in climates with a wet and dry period. It has moderate salt tolerance. It needs a temperature between 10-30°C. It does well in a greenhouse with night temperatures of 20°C and day temperatures of 37°C. It needs a well-drained soil. It suits hardiness zones 9-12.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It can be grown from cuttings. It can also be grown from seeds. It can be used for hedges.

NOTES

There are about 16-20 Pereskia species. They have leaves.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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French, B.R. & Maynard, A.R. Food Plants International Database. Food Plants International

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