PLANT FACT SHEET

Vangueria apiculata K. Schum.

GENUS *Vangueria* **FAMILY** Rubiaceae

COMMON NAMES Tangle-flowered wild medlar

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit

The ripe fruit are eaten raw as a snack. The seeds are discarded.

DESCRIPTION

A shrub which loses its leaves during the year. It grows 1.5 to 10 m tall. The bark is smooth and grey-brown. The leaves are thin and papery without hairs. The are oval with a pointed tip. They are about 13 cm long by 6 cm wide. There are 7-11 main veins on each side of the midrib. The network of veins can be seen underneath the leaf. The leaf stalk is 7 mm long. The flowers grow beside the leaves. They are greenish-white and in much branched bunches. The flowers are like tiny tubes. The fruit is green but becomes yellow brown when ripe. The fruit is round and 17-20 mm long. The fruit is edible.

HABITAT

A tropical species. It grows in evergreen forest. It often occurs on termite mounds and on rocky ground. It grows in open forest, secondary scrub and cultivated land. In Kenya it grows between 900-2,500 m altitude.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. Seed is sown directly where the plants are to grow. Plants can be grown in pots then transplanted. It may be useful to soak seeds overnight in cold water. Seed should be sown as soon as they are separated from the fruit. Plants can be topped or cut back and allowed to regrow.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Fruit are collected in the dry season. They are harvested by climbing the tree.

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