PLANT FACT SHEET

Piper longum L.

GENUS *Piper* **FAMILY** Piperaceae

COMMON NAMES Long pepper, Indian long pepper

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Seeds, Herb, Spice, Leaves

The fruit are used as flavouring. They are berries which are dried and used as a spice. They are added to curries and pickles.
The young fruit are eaten raw.
The leaves are eaten raw, fried with meat or used in soups.

DESCRIPTION

A twining herb. It can be several metres long. It is creeping or climbing and forms roots below. The leaves often have small hairs. The branches are smooth. The leaves have stalks. The leaf blade is 3-12 cm long by 2-12 cm wide. They are broadly oval to heart shaped. They taper to a short tip. The lower leaves have long stalks. The upper leaves do not have stalks and clasp the stem. There are usually 5 veins at the base. The flowers are green. They are opposite the leaves. The male spike is 5.5 cm long and 3 mm wide. The female spike is 1.5-1.5 cm long and 2.5-4 mm wide. The fruit is a berry. The berries stick to the axis or central stalk.

HABITAT

A tropical and subtropical plant. In Nepal it grows to about 800 m altitude. In China it grows at about 600 m altitude in Yunnan. It is cultivated in other provinces in the south. In XTBG Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed or root offshoots. Seeds are slow to germinate taking 30 days. Plants can be grown from cutting runner shoots. These should be 15-22 cm long with 2-3 nodes. These can be put in a nursery and transplanted after 3-4 months. It is best in shade. A spacing of 1.5 m is suitable.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Plants produce after 3-4 years.

NOTES

There are between 1000-2000 Piper species. They are mostly in the tropics. It is used in medicine. It has anticancer properties.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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