PLANT FACT SHEET

Maerua angolensis DC.

GENUS *Maerua* **FAMILY** Capparaceae

COMMON NAMES Bead-bean

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Roots, Fruit, Seeds, Vegetable

The young leaves are boiled and eaten. They are usually mixed with beans or corn and eaten. The leaves can be bitter and are used as a sauce with other foods.
The fruit is eaten as a snack. The seeds are cooked as a spice.
The roots are used in porridges and as a famine food.

DESCRIPTION

A tree. It grows to 10-20 m high. Young branches are yellow but older bark is darker. The branches droop. The leaves are simple and sword shaped. They are 2.5-7 cm long by 1.3-5.5 cm wide. The tip is rounded or has a notch. They taper to the base. The leaf stalk is 3 cm long and is often swollen just above the leaf. The flowers occur singly in the axils of the upper leaves. They can be in short spikes at the ends of branches. The fruit are like long slender beans. They can be 2-16 cm long by 1 cm wide. They are constricted between the beans.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows in low altitude wooded grassland. It occurs in savannah regions. It grows in the Sahel. In Ethiopia it grows from sea level to 1,000 m altitude. In Zimbabwe it grows up to 1,500 m above sea level. It is drought tolerant. It can grow in arid places. It often grows in termite mounds.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed.

Harvesting and Seed Production

The leaves are harvested by climbing the trees.

NOTES

There are 50-100 Maerua species. They are mostly in Africa.

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