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.

Juniperus virginiana L.

GENUS *Juniperus* **FAMILY** Cupressaceae

COMMON NAMES Virginian cedar

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit

The fruit or berries are cooked and eaten. They are also dried and ground into a meal and eaten in cakes.
The dried and roasted berries are used as a coffee substitute.
They should only be eaten in small amounts and not by pregnant women.

DESCRIPTION

A tree. It grows 15-30 m tall and spreads 4.5-7.5 m wide. It is often conical in shape. The trunk can be 20 cm across. The bark is brown and comes away in shreds. The twigs are slender and 4 sided. The leaves are grey-green with patches of waxy young leaves. The adult leaves are scale like. They are 2 mm long and pointed. Successive pairs of leaves overlap. The needles are 12 mm long and often on the same branch as the scale leaves. The fruit are brown-blue berries. They are 3-6 mm across. They have a white bloom. They contain 1 or 2 seeds.

HABITAT

A temperate plant. It grows on rocky ridges and dry sandy soils. It is hardy and will grow on most kinds of soil. It grows naturally in Eastern North America. It suits hardiness zones 2-8.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. The cones need 18 months of cold weather before seed will germinate. It self seeds easily.

Harvesting and Seed Production

It is slow growing. The berries ripen at the end of the first growing season.

NOTES

There are 50 to 60 Juniperus species. The oil from this one is used in medicine. It has anticancer properties.

PICTURES



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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