PLANT FACT SHEET

Persicaria barbata (L.) H. Hara

GENUS *Persicaria* **FAMILY** Polygonaceae

COMMON NAMES Smartweed, Joint weed, Knot weed

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Vegetable

The leaves are eaten in Congo and Madagascar.
Tender shoots and leaves are cooked and eaten in Nepal.
The leaves are used in curries in India.

DESCRIPTION

A herb which can grow in water or on land. It continues growing from year to year. It grows to 0.5-1.2 m tall and spreads 0.6-2 m across. The stems are erect and creeping. The stem is about 5 mm thick near the base. It can have stiff upward pointing hairs. The plant often branches repeatedly. They are often floating and can be smooth or hairy. They have a sheath which is 2 cm long and pale and lets light through. The short sheath around the stem has hairs. The leaves are 7-20 cm long by 1.5-3 cm wide. They are narrow and oval. They have short stalks. The leaves are green and are hairy on the lower midrib and along the edges. The tip is pointed. The flowers occur in branched flower arrangements at the ends of branches. These are about 10 cm long. The flowers are about 0.2 cm long and greenish white. The fruit is a small glossy black nut.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It is usually beside waterways. A moisture loving plant. It grows from sea level to over 2000 m altitude. In Nepal it grows up to 1200 m altitude. It grows in moist places. It grows in wetlands. In Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It can be grown from seed or by dividing the clump using sections with roots on the lower parts. It grows naturally in many places.

NOTES

There are about 75 Persicaria species.

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