PLANT FACT SHEET

Gymnosporia senegalensis (Lam.) Loes.

GENUS *Gymnosporia* **FAMILY** Celastraceae

COMMON NAMES Confetti tree, Confetti spikethorn, Red spikethorn

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds, Roots, Fruit, Flowers, Leaves - flavouring, Vegetable

The wood and leaves are reduced to ash and used as a vegetable salt.
The ripe fruit is eaten raw. The seed coat is removed before the seeds are eaten. It is also used in soup.
The roots are cooked and eaten with meat broth.
The leaves and flowers are eaten in soup. They are boiled in water and the water changed then cooked as a vegetable.

DESCRIPTION

A shrub or small tree. It is usually 3-5 m high but can be 9 m high. The bark is light grey and smooth. Young branches are reddish and can have thorns. The leaves are alternate and oblong. They are 2-12 cm long by 4-6 cm wide. They are pale blue-green with a whitish bloom. The flowers are cream or white and 4-6 mm across. They occur in dense clusters in the axils or leaves. These clusters are 4 cm across. They have a sweet scent. The sexes are separate and usually on separate trees. The fruit is a 2 lobed capsule. They are 2-6 mm across. They are green with a red colour when mature. The seeds have a yellow or pink seed coat.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It grows from sea level to 2400 m altitude in South Africa. It is common in open woodland. In East Africa it grows from sea level to 2,100 m altitude. It grows in the Sahel. It grows in areas with a rainfall between 200-1,500 mm per year. It can grow in arid places.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seeds.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Plants grow fairly quickly.

NOTES

There are about 200 Maytenus species. It has anticancer properties.

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