PLANT FACT SHEET

Brassica carinata A. Braun

GENUS *Brassica* **FAMILY** Brassicaceae

COMMON NAMES Abyssinian cabbage, African cabbage

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Seeds, bud, Vegetable, Seeds - oil

The seeds are cooked whole. They are used to make a mustard.
The young leaves are cooked. They are also used in salads.
The flower buds and young shoots are eaten raw.
The seed produces a good quality cooking oil. (It has a mustard taste unless refined)

DESCRIPTION

A cabbage family herb. The leafy form grows for 3-4 years. It is 2 m tall. The stem is 2 cm across. The stem is usually without hairs but is waxy. It is grey green but with purple blotches. It has many branches which hang down. They are above 30 cm on the stalk. The leaves are light green and stalked. They vary a lot in shape. The leaves become smaller and with less lobes nearer the flower. The flower is yellow and occurs in branched flower stalks. The fruit are pods which are up to 65 mm long and 8 mm wide. They hang downwards. The seeds are 1-2.5 mm across and vary in shape and colour. They are reddish brown.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It occurs in the highlands of Ethiopia and Kenya. It has been introduced to other countries. It will grow on most agricultural soils. It needs a cool climate (15-20°C) and requires a sunny position. It is mostly grown between 1500-2500 m altitude in tropical regions. It can grow with a rainfall of 200-500 mm but is usually sown at the beginning of the rains.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It is grown from seed. Seed germinate and come up in about 3 days. Leafy kinds do best on fertile well drained soils. For leafy kinds seed is sown into a fine well prepared seed bed and transplanted after 6 weeks. Plants can be established from cuttings. For leafy kinds a spacing of 50 x 50 cm is suitable. Oil seed kinds are sown more closely with about 500,000 plant per hectare.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Leaf yields can be 4800 kg per hectare. Much higher yields are possible with intensive production. Leaf harvest can occur after 47 days under best conditions.

NOTES

There are about 30 Brassica species and many cultivated varieties.
It is an amphidiploid between Brassica nigra and Brassica oleracea cultivated for 4,000 years.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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