PLANT FACT SHEET

# *Ruscus aculeatus* Linn.

**GENUS** *Ruscus* **FAMILY** Asparagaceae

**COMMON NAMES** Box Holly, Butcher's broom, Jew's myrtle, Sicilian asparagus

## EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

**Edible parts:** Shoots, Stems, Seeds - coffee

The young developing shoots are cooked and eaten like asparagus. They are pungent and somewhat bitter. They are dressed with olive oil and lemon juice.
The seeds are used as a substitute for coffee.

## DESCRIPTION

A shrub. It grows 75-100 cm high and spreads 100 cm wide. It forms clumps. The stems are erect. It spreads by underground stems or rhizomes. The leaves are reduced. The stems are flattened and like leaves. These are 18-30 mm long and have prickly tips. The flowers are on the surface of these leaf like structures. The flowers are greenish-white and 3 mm long. They can occur singly or in pairs. Male and female flowers are on separate plants. The fruit are bright red berries. They are 7 mm across.

## HABITAT

It is a warm temperate plant. It grows in woods, scrub and usually in shade. It suits hardiness zones 6-10. Melbourne Botanical Gardens. Hobart Botanical Gardens.

## PRODUCTION

### Cultivation

It can be grown from seed.

## NOTES

There are 5-6 Ruscus species.
Also put in the family Ruscaceae.

## PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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