PLANT FACT SHEET

Smilax china Linn.

GENUS *Smilax* **FAMILY** Smilacaceae

COMMON NAMES Sun Moon Vine, China root, Chinese Sarsaparilla

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Leaves, Root, Leaves - tea

The young leaves are eaten with oil and salt. They are also boiled as a vegetable.
The leaves are also used to make a tea drink.
The fruit are eaten to quench thirst.
The roots are eaten. The are boiled and made into stock. They are also used for brewing.

DESCRIPTION

A climbing vine. It loses its leaves during the year. The roots are brown and feel woody and grow horizontally. The rhizomes are irregular and like tubers. The stems are branched and 1-5 m long. They are woody with some prickles. The leaf stalk is 0.5-1.5 cm long with narrow wings for more than half the length. There are tendrils. The leaf blade is oval and 3-10 cm long by 1.5-6 cm wide. The flowers are borne in the axil of a young leaf. The flower stalk is 1-2 cm long. There are 10-25 flowers of both sexes. They are yellowish green. The fruit are red berries. They are round and 0.6-1.5 cm wide.

HABITAT

It grows in forests and thickets on hillsides and grassy slopes in shady places near streams. In China it can be from sea level to 2000 m. In Sichuan and Yunnan.

NOTES

There are about 300 Smilax species. It is used in medicine.

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