PLANT FACT SHEET

Use with caution

This plant can be harmful if it is eaten raw, in large amounts or without the right preparation. Read the whole fact sheet before use.

Capparis tomentosa Lam.

GENUS *Capparis* **FAMILY** Capparaceae

COMMON NAMES Woolly caper-bush

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Leaves, Seeds, Vegetable, Gum

The ripe fruit are occasionally eaten raw by children. The flower buds are eaten in salted vinegar.
The leaves are cooked and eaten.
Caution: The roots are very poisonous.

DESCRIPTION

It is a spiny scrambling shrub or dense climber. The trunk can be 13-15 cm across and is covered with spines. The branches are covered with thick yellow hairs. The leaves are soft and grey-green. They are oval and 2.5-7 cm long and 1.5-4 cm wide. They have a rounded tip with short sharp point. The spines grow in the axils of the leaves. They are short, hooked and point downwards. The flower buds are round and velvety. They grow in clusters at the ends of branches. The flowers are large, pale green and have a smell. The fruit are long and hang downwards. They have a stout neck and stalk. They are reddish orange when ripe.

HABITAT

It is a tropical or warm climate plant. In East Africa it grows between 1,200-2,300 m altitude. It grows in the Sahel. It can grow in arid places. It occurs on termite mounds.

NOTES

The plant is claimed to have a range of medicinal uses. There are about 250 Capparis species. There are about 50 Capparis species in tropical America.

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