



PLANT FACT SHEET

Canavalia rosea (Swartz) DC.

GENUS *Canavalia* FAMILY Fabaceae

COMMON NAMES Mackenzie Bean, Coastal jack bean, Fire Bean

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds, Pods, Flowers, Fruit

CAUTION: The seeds are poisonous raw.

The seeds are edible after thorough cooking. They are also roasted ad ground and used as a coffee substitute.

The flowers are eaten as a flavouring. They are used in sauces.

The pods are edible when young.

DESCRIPTION

A perennial climbing or trailing legume. It can be 1.8-10 m long. The stems are silky hairy when young. Leaves have 3 leaflets and the central one is the largest. The leaves are smooth, dark green and slightly leathery. The leaflets are oval or round and often with an indent at the top and 2.5-9.5 cm long by 1.5-9 cm wide. The leaf stalk is 2-7 cm long. The flower cluster can stick upright or hang over. It is 4-18 cm long and the flower stalk is 10-21 cm long. The main rear petal is pink or purple often with a white area near the base. The fruit or pods are oblong and compressed. They are flattened and woody. They can be 11.5-15 cm long by 2.5-3 cm wide. Each section of the pod has a rib. The seeds are brown with streaks. The seeds are 1.5-2 cm long, 0.9-1.4 cm wide and 5-11 mm thick. The seed scar is 7-9 mm long.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It occurs throughout the tropics and into the subtropics. It is very common along sea shores. It occurs on sandy beaches at high tide mark. It can grow in arid places. They need a well drained soil and a sunny position. It suits hardiness zones 9-12.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. The seeds need treatment to break the hard seed coat. They can also be grown from cuttings.

Harvesting and Seed Production

It takes 2 years to complete its life cycle.

NOTES

There are about 50 *Canavalia* species.

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