PLANT FACT SHEET

Bauhinia petersiana Bolle

GENUS *Bauhinia* **FAMILY** Fabaceae

COMMON NAMES White bauhinia, Zambezi coffee

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds - coffee, Seeds, flower - nectar, Root

The ground seeds are sometimes used as a coffee substitute.
The seeds are eaten green and ripe. Ripe seeds are roasted and peeled and pounded into a gritty meal.
The nectar of the flowers is eaten
The root is eaten raw and also baked and pounded.

DESCRIPTION

An untidy spreading bush. It grows 3-4 m high. It can be 9 m high. The bark is dark and powdery and flakes off in strips. The leaves have lobes for almost half their length. The lobes are oval. They are 3.5-6 cm long and 3-8 cm wide. The base of the leaf is deeply lobed. The flowers are long and crinkled with white petals. Flowers are 8 cm long by 1-1.5 cm wide. The fruit is a large brown pod. These are 12-18 cm long by 3-6 cm wide. They split open rapidly forming a spiral.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows in woodland and wooded grassland at medium and low altitudes. It is often on termite mounds. It grows from 120-1800 m altitude. It is more common in the lowlands. It is damaged by drought or frost. It needs well-drained soil. In Zimbabwe it grows in areas with a rainfall between 600-750 mm per year. It suits hardiness zones 10-12.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seeds. The seeds usually grow quickly. The roots are only shallow.

NOTES

There are about 250-350 Bauhinia species. Most are in the tropics. Also as Caesalpinaceae.

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French, B.R. & Maynard, A.R. Food Plants International Database. Food Plants International

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