PLANT FACT SHEET

Ferula assa-foetida L.

GENUS *Ferula* **FAMILY** Apiaceae

COMMON NAMES Asafoetida, Stinking Gum

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Root, Spice, Stems, Gum

It is used as a seasoning. The resin is sold in lumps. It is used to flavour soups, curried fish, sauces and pickles.
The leaves and stems can be cooked and eaten as a vegetable. The bad smell disappears with cooking.
The spice is made from the milk like juice of the plant. It is added to meat balls and gives a truffle like flavour. It is also used in Worcestershire sauce.
The young folded heads are eaten raw. The roots are roasted and eaten.

DESCRIPTION

A herb. It keeps growing from year to year. It can grow 3-4 m high. The stems can be 7.5 cm across. The plant has a bad smell. The stems are thick and coarse. When wounded the stems exude a white sticky sap which turns red-yellow. The upper leaf sheath is about 9 cm long by 4 cm wide. At the base 3-4 leaves occur together. They are 3-3.5 cm long by 1.5-2.5 cm wide. The flowers occur in a rounded panicle. The flowers are bright yellow. The flowers only appear after about 5 years of growth. The fruit are in a rounded head. There are 10-50 rays.

HABITAT

It is a temperate plant. It grows in dry stony locations. It needs rich, well-drained soil. It needs to be in the sun. It grows up to 100 m altitude.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed.

Harvesting and Seed Production

The sap is collected from plants that are at least 4 years old. The roots are exposed then slashed in a shady location for 4-6 weeks until the resin seeps out and hardens. The drying resin is then scraped off. The powder is made by grinding the dried resin with some form of starch.

NOTES

There are 172 Ferula species. It is anti flatulent.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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ONLINE FACT SHEET https://www.echocommunity.org/en/resources/e7b31973-bcef-4bc6-a0b3-b089ff7e5104