PLANT FACT SHEET

Perilla frutescens (L.) Britton

GENUS *Perilla* **FAMILY** Lamiaceae

COMMON NAMES Perilla, Beefsteak plant

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Seeds - spice, Flowers, Seeds - oil, Vegetable, Leaves - tea

The young leaves, flowers and seeds are eaten cooked. They can be dried and used later. They are also used for flavouring. They are used in chutney.
The young cotyledons are sprouted and eaten.
The roasted seeds are pickled.
The seed oil is used as an ingredient in cooking. They are used to improve the taste of curry.
Caution: Wild forms are poisonous due to ketones. These are toxins to the liver.

DESCRIPTION

An erect herb. It re-grows each year. It grows from 30 cm to 2 m tall. The stems are square. Plants can be green or purple. The leaf stalk is 3-5 cm long. The leaves are oval and 4.5-10 cm long by 2.8-10 cm wide. They are toothed along the edge. Leaves are hairy on both surfaces. The flowers are white. They are in equal stalked flower clusters either in the axils of leaves or at the ends of branches. The fruit is a 1-seeded nutlet. There are a range of cultivated varieties.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. Plants are frost tender. In Nepal they grow between 600-2400 m altitude. It needs rich, well-drained soil and full sun. It suits hardiness zone 8-11. In XTBG Yunnan. In Sichuan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. The seed need to be cooled to 5°C for 3 days before planting. Seed need light to germinate. Plants should be spaced about 30 cm apart.

NOTES

There is only one (6) Perilla species.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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