PLANT FACT SHEET

Brexia madagascariensis (Lamarck) Thours ex Ker-Gawl.

GENUS *Brexia* **FAMILY** Celastraceae

COMMON NAMES Madagascar brexia

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit

The fruit softens as it ripens to become edible.

DESCRIPTION

An evergreen shrub or small tree. It is dense, with many branches. It is mostly only 2-3 m high. The bark is grey with stripes. The leaves are alternate and vary in shape. They are narrow and oblong. They are 3.5-14 cm long and thickly leathery. The flowers are white large and with 5 spreading petals. These tend to curve backwards. These can be 2 cm long. The flowers occur in loose clusters. They are mostly in leaf axils but sometimes on old wood. The fruit are long and narrow and woody. They are 9 cm long with 5 ridges. The fruit can float in the sea for months and the seed remain viable. They contain many seeds.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It occurs in bush and scrub near the beach. It can also be at the edges of mangrove swamps. It can grow up to 100 m above sea level. It has been grown up to 1,500 m above sea level. It needs full sun and a reasonably fertile soil. It is best in a well-drained, moist soil. It can tolerate alkaline soils, salty soils and salt spray. It can grow in arid places.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It is usually grown from seed. The fruit can float in sea water for many months and the seeds will still grow.

Harvesting and Seed Production

In Tanzania ripe fruit are available in November and December.

NOTES

There is only one Brexia although some scholars recognise nine or eleven. Some put this one in the Grossulariaceae, Brexiaceae, Escalloniaceae and other families.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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ONLINE FACT SHEET https://www.echocommunity.org/en/resources/f182c968-6099-42d7-9685-49124ed1bf33