PLANT FACT SHEET

Use with caution

This plant can be harmful if it is eaten raw, in large amounts or without the right preparation. Read the whole fact sheet before use.

Calotropis procera (Aiton) Dryand

GENUS *Calotropis* **FAMILY** Apocynaceae

COMMON NAMES Caltrops, Giant milkweed, Purple crown flower

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Flowers, Leaves - drink, Seeds, Sap, Fruit

The flower shoots are eaten young and raw.
The leaves are occasionally eaten. The leaves are used for making an alcoholic drink.
Caution: The sap of this plant contains calotropin that can cause damage to the heart.
In Ethiopia the sap is added to milk to help it coagulate.
The latex is used in beer and cheese making.
The fruit is chopped into small pieces and cooked as a vegetable.

DESCRIPTION

A small shrub. It has broad leaves and keeps its leaves throughout the year. It grows 2-5 m high. The bark is fibrous and deeply cracked when old. The stem is simple and only occasionally branched. The leaves are opposite and simple. The leaves are greyish-green. They are broadly oval and 5-30 cm long by 3-15 cm wide. They end abruptly. The flowers are purple and white. They are in dense groups from the nodes. The fruit is simple, fleshy and inflated. It is an oblique to oval follicle 10 cm across. There are many seeds.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It grows in arid and semiarid regions in Central America. It is resistant to drought, frost and salt. It grows in the Sahel. It grows in savannah woodland. It grows in areas with an annual rainfall between 400-900 mm. It can grow in arid places. In Zimbabwe it grows up to 1,000 m above sea level. In Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seed.

NOTES

There are 3 Calotropis species. It has anticancer properties. Also put in the family Asclepiadaceae.

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PROVIDED BY **Food Plants International**

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

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