



PLANT FACT SHEET

Dioscorea elephantipes (L'Her.) Engl.

GENUS *Dioscorea* **FAMILY** Dioscoreaceae

COMMON NAMES Elephant's foot, Hottentot bread

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Tuber, Root

The tubers have been cooked and eaten in times of famine by Hottentots in South Africa. It is processed for starch.

DESCRIPTION

A yam. A vine with a succulent growth near ground level. This can grow 1 m long and 1 m high. It is above ground. It has angular lumps. It is hard and corky. The stems twine to the left. The leaves are heart shaped. The flowers are yellowish-green. The male flowers are in erect flowering stalks and the female flowers are nodding and spiny.

HABITAT

It is a warm temperate to subtropical plant. It cannot tolerate frost. It grows naturally on dry rocky slopes in South Africa. It is best in light, well-drained soils. It needs an open, sunny position. In South Africa it grows between 250-1,250 m above sea level. It can grow in arid places. Hobart Botanical Gardens hot house. It suits hardiness zones 9-11.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. They can also be grown by cuttings.

NOTES

There are about 650 species of *Dioscorea*.

PICTURES



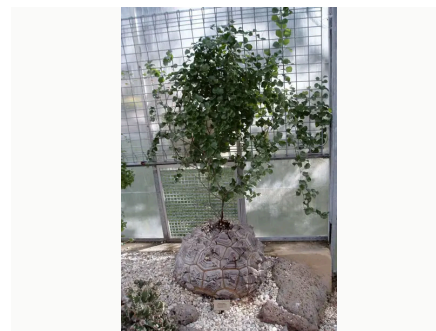
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