



PLANT FACT SHEET

Prosopis africana (Guill. et Perr.) Taub.

GENUS *Prosopis* FAMILY Fabaceae

COMMON NAMES Mesquite

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds, Pods, Fruit, Vegetable

The seeds are used to make a vegetable butter used in flavouring. They are fermented. They are also used in chutneys and relishes.

The young pods are eaten.

DESCRIPTION

A large tree. It can grow to 25 m high. The trunk is 80 cm across. It grows straight and un-buttressed in forests and low and crooked in open conditions. The crown is open. The leaves droop. The bark is very dark and scaly. The leaves are alternate and twice divided. The leaves are 10-15 cm long. There are 9-16 pairs of leaflets along 3-6 pairs of opposite leaflets stalks. The leaflets are oblong and 12-30 mm long. The flowers are pale green to yellow. They have a scent. The fruit are dark brown pods. They are thick and hard and 15 cm long by 3 cm wide. There are about 10 loose rattling seeds in each pod.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It can grow in forest, savannah and Sahel in West Africa. It grows in areas with an annual rainfall between 400-1,200 mm. It grows between 720-1,220 m above sea level. It can grow in arid places.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seeds. Seeds are best when treated with hot water to allow them to germinate. The seedlings can be transplanted after 14-18 weeks.

Harvesting and Seed Production

It flowers shortly after the rainy season.

NOTES

There are about 44 *Prosopis* species. Also as Mimosaceae.

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