PLANT FACT SHEET

Aframomum melegueta K. Schum.

GENUS *Aframomum* **FAMILY** Zingiberaceae

COMMON NAMES Grains of Paradise, Melegueta pepper

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds, Spice, Fruit, Leaves - tea

The seeds have a flavour like mild cardamom. They are hot and peppery. They are used to flavour wines, beer, cordials, liqueurs, meats and breads. They are used in soups and stews.
The fruit pulp around the seeds are eaten or chewed as a stimulant.
The leaves are used for tea.

DESCRIPTION

A ginger family herb. It keeps growing from year to year. It has underground stems or rhizomes. These are 2-3 mm thick and short. The leaves are broadly sword shaped. They are 35 cm long and 15 cm wide. The leaves reach 0.8-2 m high. The flowers are on 5 cm stems that emerge just above ground level. They are purple and trumpet shaped. The fruit are pear shaped and 10 cm long. They are red to orange and contain many seeds. The seeds are light grey and dull. They are almost round with irregular flat spots.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It can grow in arid places. It grows in forest and savannah. It is often in swampy locations. It grows in shade.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown by division. It can be grown from seeds.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Plants begin fruiting after 3 years and produce for another 4 years. The seeds are removed from their pod for drying.

NOTES

There are about 50 Aframomum species.

PICTURES

Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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