



PLANT FACT SHEET



Poisonous

This plant, or parts of it, can be poisonous. Do not eat it unless you know which parts are safe and how they must be prepared.

Catharanthus roseus (L.) G. Don.

GENUS *Catharanthus* FAMILY Apocynaceae

COMMON NAMES Madagascan Periwinkle

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Seeds, Medicine

CAUTION: Due to alkaloids this leaf should not be eaten without suitable processing.

The very young leaves have been recorded as eaten but should probably not be eaten in large quantities.

A tea is made from the leaves.

DESCRIPTION

An evergreen shrub. It grows 1 m high and spreads to 1 m wide. In colder climates it is smaller and grown as an annual. It has a woody base and a fleshy top. The stem is short, erect and branching. The leaves are glossy green and oval. They are 5 cm long. The leaves have pale midribs. The flowers are soft pink tinged with red. There are 5 petals. The flowers are 4 cm across.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It is native to Madagascar. It prefers rich, moist, well drained soil. It needs a protected sunny position. It is drought and frost tender. Seed need a temperature of at least 13-18°C to grow. The plant can grow in temperatures down to 5-7°C. It is drought resistant. It suits hardiness zones 9-11. In Sichuan and Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seed or cuttings. Seedlings grown slowly. Seed are sown 6 mm deep. They should be in a temperature of 24-27°C to quicken germination. Seedlings can be transplanted.

NOTES

There are about 6-8 *Catharanthus* species. It is used in medicine. This plant has more than 60 different kinds of alkaloids. Some of these (vincleucoblastine, and leurocristine) are used in the treatment of cancer.

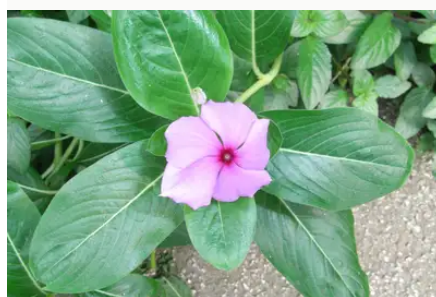
PICTURES



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