



PLANT FACT SHEET

Boesenbergia rotunda (L.) Mansfield

GENUS *Boesenbergia* FAMILY Zingiberaceae

COMMON NAMES Chinese keys

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Rhizome, Root, Tubers, Leaves, Spice

The swollen rhizomes are eaten raw, used in soups along with vegetables, and in fish curries.

In some places the leaves are used in pickles.

The roots give a spicy flavour to many dishes.

The rhizome is used to spice food.

The very young leaves are sometimes used as a spice.

DESCRIPTION

A part of the ginger family. The plant continues to grow from year to year. The plant is 30-50 cm high. The roots are like a long orange brown group of fingers. These rhizomes are the size of fingers. They are 6-10 cm long and 1 cm wide. Inside the brown skin is a yellow sweet smelling tissue. The leaves occur as 3-4 leaves 10-30-50 cm long by 5-10 cm wide. The leaf stalk is 5-12 cm long and has a channel. The leaf sheath is red. The flowers are at the ends of the stalk. There are few flowers surrounded by narrow bracts. Each bract 5 cm long surrounds one flower. The flowers are white or pink. The flowers have a smell. The fruit is oval.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. In colder regions, leaves will die back in winter. They need a fertile, open, loamy soil. The soil need to be well drained. They shoot best with warmth and humidity. They then grow best in warm shady positions. They need a rainfall of 1000 mm per year. In China it grows in dense forests at about 1000 m in S China. In Cairns Botanical Gardens.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from pieces of root with one or two buds attached. These are planted 5 cm deep.

NOTES

There are about 50 *Boesenbergia* species. It has several flavonoids.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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