



month though this practice greatly reduces the nutritive value and changes the texture. (See *BvAT Guide on Vegetable drying*).

8. Nutrition and Cooking

Jute mallow is an important leafy vegetable in many countries. Its leaves and tender stems are eaten boiled, stew,

stir-fried, or in soup. It is eaten with starchy foods like ugali. Sticky leaf mass is used as vegetarian spread. Leaf and tender stems are rich in vitamins A, C, E, B2, folic acid, calcium, iron and protein.



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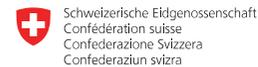
BvAT Practical Guide

Jute Mallow Growing Guide

Botanical name: *Corchorus olitorius*

Common Names: Jute Mallow (English), Mrenda (Swahili), Omrere (Luhya)

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1. Description

Jute mallow is an important African Leafy Vegetable, grown in western Kenya. It is highly nutritious and is a source of income for farmers. It has its origins from the Middle-East. The leaves can be eaten raw or cooked; used fresh in salads, cooked as a side vegetable, or made into soup. The cooked leaves are mucilaginous, and dried leaves can be used as a thickener in soups or brewed as a tea. In Kenya, Jute plant leaves are mainly consumed among the Luhya people of Western Kenya, where it is commonly known as mrenda or murere. It is eaten with starchy foods like ugali, a staple for most communities in Kenya.

2. Uses and Benefits of Jute Mallow

Jute mallow is rich in iron, vitamin C and calcium, which is good for the bones. The nutritious leaves are high in vitamins A, C, E, K, potassium, calcium and magnesium and contain beta carotene and iron. It is said to aid digestion, improve vision, lower stress, and increase libido among other health benefits. The leaves also contain 6 different anti-oxidants.

3. Climatic, Soil and Water Requirements

The optimum temperature is 25°C to 32°C. It does not tolerate cold weather. It performs best in areas with 600 – 2000mm rainfall per year and is sensitive to prolonged drought conditions. It prefers well drained rich loam soils though it can grow in a wide range of soils. The optimum pH is 4.5 to 8.2. It does not do well under shade.

4. Propagation and Planting

Seed should be sown just before the rains when the soil is warm. Jute mallow seed can be sown directly on prepared land either as a monocrop or intercropped with other crops.

5. Crop Husbandry

Harvest by cutting the upper 6-8 inches of growth. The tender stems from this region are also edible if finely cut up along with the leaves. Repeat cuttings can be made from each flush of new



growth for 3 to 4 seasons. Alternatively, you can sow seeds in succession and harvest the entire young plant at once.

6. Common Pests & Diseases and their control

The most serious pests are nematodes from the genus *Meloidogyne*, leaf-eating beetles and caterpillars. If it is dry, eight to ten weeks after planting, yield losses can occur due to leaf bugs and spider mites attacks resulting in terminal shoot wilt. Damage by nematodes can be minimized by crop rotation. Jute mallow is also susceptible to attacks by weevils species and yellow mites.

Diseases (bacterial and viruses infections) are not as serious as pests. Seedling damp-off occurs but can be reduced by good drainage and cultivation in humus-rich soils with adequate water holding capacity.

7. Harvesting and Post-Harvest Management

The jute mallow plants grow quickly and are ready for the first cutting in about 60-70 days. The leaves may be dried and stored for later use. Preservation is done by sun-drying. The leaves may be dried and stored for up to one