

Ephedra seeds (ephedraceae)

The Ephedra plant belongs to the gnetum family (gnetaceae). It is an erect, broom-like shrub, 60 cm (2 ft) high. The leafless stems are pale green when young and olive brown with age. Male and female flowers are found on separate plants. The seeds are a smooth brown color and paired. Common on slopes and hills, mostly below 1500 m (4,500 ft) elevation.

Cultivation and Propagation

The Ephedra is robust and doesn't need much attention. Plant the seeds around 20 °C (68° F). Grow indoors or in a warm and dry climate, free of frost. It thrives in ordinary loamy soil and does very well in a loose rocky soil with full sun and a little water. It is most often propagated by division of the clumps in spring, and seeds sown in a light sandy soil in early spring. It makes an excellent ground cover on rocky slopes.

Harvesting

The tops of the branches may be picked and dried at any time as long as the plant is not denuded or the branches cut back past the viable buds.