



PLANT FACT SHEET

Alternanthera sessilis (L.) R. Br. ex DC.

GENUS *Alternanthera* **FAMILY** Amaranthaceae

COMMON NAMES Lotus-seed Herb, Joyweed

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Flowers, Shoots, Vegetable

The leaves and tender tips are cooked and eaten. They are used in soups. They are boiled or baked or fried. It is also used to prepare a cool drink.

The harvested leaves can only be stored for 2-3 days.

DESCRIPTION

A low lying and spreading herb which has many branches. It continues to grow from year to year. It has a strong taproot. The stem and branches are up to 60-100 cm long and near the ends there are 2 lines of hairs along the stem. The leaves are smooth and attached to the stem without a stalk. They are opposite. The leaves are 1-10 cm long and 0.2-2 cm wide. The flowers heads are white and 5 to 7 mm long. They grow along the plant and do not have flower stalks. It flowers all year round. The fruit are oval and compressed on the side. The seed is about 1.5 cm across. When plants are growing in water the stems become hollow and the plants float.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows in the lowlands and the highlands. It occurs in most tropical places. It is best in humid places. It is common in waste land at low and medium altitudes in the Philippines. It grows in open moist places from sea level to 2,000 m in Papua New Guinea. In Fiji it grows from sea level to 500 m. In Nepal it grows to 2400 m altitude. It can grow in arid places. It is best in alkaline soil. It can grow in seasonally water logged soils and near rivers and ditches. It grows in wetlands. In Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It can be grown by dividing the underground stem. It can also be grown from sections which root at their nodes. It can be grown by seed.

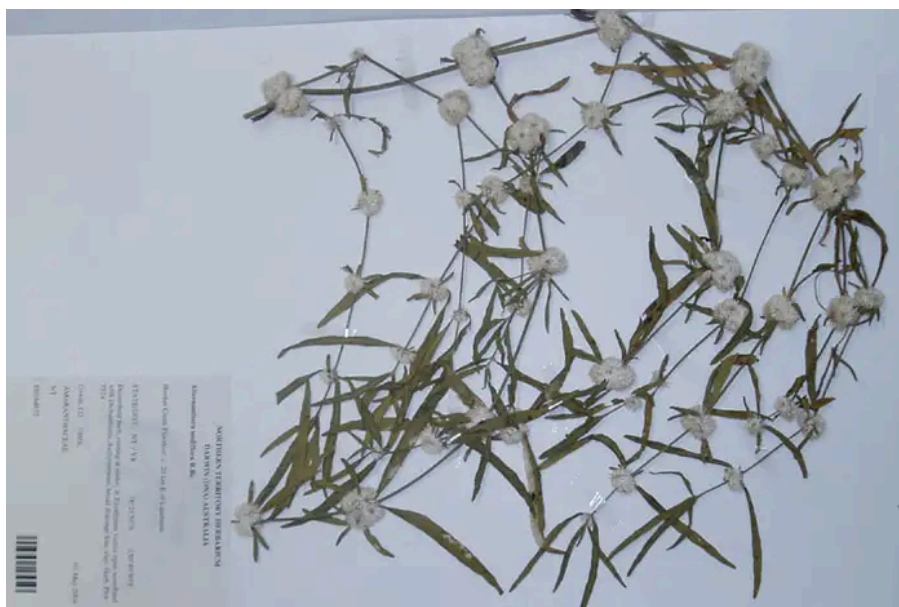
Harvesting and Seed Production

The first harvest of leaves can be taken 50-60 days after planting.

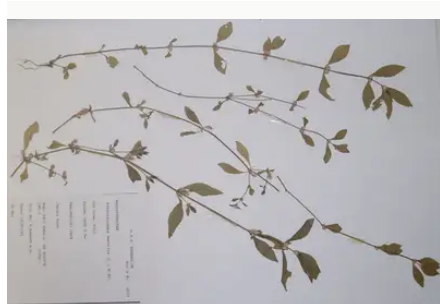
NOTES

There are 200 *Alternanthera* species. Chemical composition (after Hooper): Water = 70.40% (fresh). Fat = 3.65% (dry). Albumenoids = 16.35% (dry). Carbohydrates = 47.99% (dry). Fibre = 11.47% (dry). Ash = 20.54% (dry). Nitrogen = 2.60% (dry). Phosphoric acid = .52% (dry). Silicates = 6.16% (dry).
It enhances milk flow in mothers. It is high in proVitamin A.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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