PLANT FACT SHEET

Alternanthera philoxeroides (Martius) Griseb.

GENUS *Alternanthera* **FAMILY** Amaranthaceae

COMMON NAMES Alligator weed

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Vegetable, Stem

The young leaves and tender shoots are cooked and eaten as a vegetable. They are bitter. They are often used in a mixture of vegetables. They are cooked in stir fried dishes.
The harvested leaves can only be stored for 3-4 days.
All parts except the roots are eaten raw or cooked.

DESCRIPTION

A marsh herb. It has runners or stolons. These can be 10 m long. It roots at the nodes. The stems are hollow and triangular. It can form floating masses on water. The leaves are opposite and narrow. They do not have stalks. They are 2-7 cm long by 1-2 cm wide. The flowers are white in heads on long stalks. The heads are 1 cm across and made up of several flowers. They are in the axils of leaves.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It needs a warm location. It can grow in salty water. It can grow in still or running water. It can be attached to the bank or free flowing. It can also grow away from water in high rainfall areas. Leaves are killed by frost. It grows in Sichuan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants grow from pieces of the stem which have roots at the nodes.

NOTES

There are 200 Alternanthera species. It is a serious weed in waterways in warm places. It is being investigated as medicine. It has sulphated polysaccharide compounds possibly useful against HIV.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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