PLANT FACT SHEET

Sphenoclea zeylanica Gaertner

GENUS *Sphenoclea* **FAMILY** Sphenocleaceae

COMMON NAMES Gooseweed, Chicken spike

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Fruit

The young shoots are eaten as a vegetable. They have a slightly bitter taste. They are steamed and eaten as a potherb, mixed with grated coconut, or served as a side dish with rice.
They probably need processing. In the Philippines they are squeezed and soaked in rice washings for 3 days and then serve as a salad vegetable.

DESCRIPTION

An annual herb. It grows 20-60 cm tall. The stems are much branched. They are hollow. The leaves have stalks. They are alternate and simple. The leaves are 2.5-7.5 cm long and sword shaped. The flowers are arranged in spikes at the tip of the plant. The flowers are white. The fruit is a capsule. It is enclosed in the persistent outer layer of flower parts. The fruit has 2 cells and splits around the middle. There are several seeds.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows on marshy ground and in paddy fields. It grows in rivers. In Java it grows up to 350 m above sea level. It occurs throughout the tropics. It grows in wet places. In Argentina it grows below 500 m above sea level. In Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. Seeds germinate easily on waterlogged soil.

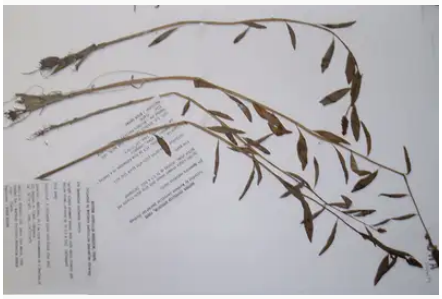
NOTES

There is only one genus in the Sphenocleaceae and only one (2) Sphenoclea species.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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