PLANT FACT SHEET

Heliotropium arboreum Linn. f.

GENUS *Heliotropium* **FAMILY** Boraginaceae

COMMON NAMES Silver leaf, Tree heliotrope

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Fruit, Vegetable

The leaves are eaten raw. They have the taste of parsley. They are used in salads.
They are also used for stuffing when cooking pigs.

DESCRIPTION

A shrub or small crooked tree. It grows 1-6 m high. The bark is light grey and deeply cracked. The leaves are light green and with silky hairs. The leaves are simple and alternate. They are broadly oval and in rings at the tips of the branches. The leaves are 10-30 cm long and 3-12 cm wide. The flowers are small, white and hairy. They occur in groups and have no stalks. The fruit are smooth and green. They are round and 5-8 mm long. There are 2-4 small nutlets that are light brown when dry.

HABITAT

A tropical and subtropical plant. It grows along sandy beaches in China. It grows in coastal regions up to 15 m altitude. It is usually in areas with rainfall or 300-5000 mm per year. It can grow in shallow, salty and infertile soils. It grows in areas with an average temperature of 20-32°C. It can be on rocky limestone banks. It needs good drainage. It can grow with soil pH of 6.1-7.4. It can tolerate windy coastal conditions.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seed. Seeds are collected from ripe fruit. The flesh is rubbed off and the seeds planted, preferably fresh. Seeds germinate in 2-4 weeks. Seedlings can be planted in the field after 12 months. It can be grown from cuttings or by layering.

Harvesting and Seed Production

It is slow growing.

NOTES

There are about 150 Tournefortia species. It can be invasive on some tropical islands.

REFERENCES

Ambasta, S.P. (Ed.), 2000, The Useful Plants of India. CSIR India. p 368 (As Messerschmidia argentea)

Burkill, I.H., 1966, A Dictionary of the Economic Products of the Malay Peninsula. Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Vol 2 (I-Z) p 2209 (As Tournefortia argentea)

Cowie, I, 2006, A Survey of Flora and vegetation of the proposed Jaco-Tutuala-Lore National Park. Timor-Lests (East Timor) www.territorystories.nt/gov.au p 45 (As Tournefortia argentea)

Cribb, A.B. & J.W., 1976, Wild Food in Australia, Fontana. p 112 (As Tournefortia argentea)

Elevitch, C.R.(ed.), 2006, Traditional Trees of the Pacific Islands: Their Culture, Environment and Use. Permanent Agriculture Resources, Holualoa, Hawaii. p 775 (As Tournefortia argentea)

Flora of Solomon Islands (As Tournefortia argentea)

Franklin, J., Keppel, G., & Whistler, W., 2008, The vegetation and flora of Lakeba, Nayau and Aiwa Islands, Central Lau Group, Fiji. Micronesica 40(1/2): 169–225, 2008 (As Tournefortia argentea)

Grubben, G. J. H. and Denton, O. A. (eds), 2004, Plant Resources of Tropical Africa 2. Vegetables. PROTA, Wageningen, Netherlands. p 565 (As Tournefortia argentea)

Heyne, K., 1927, p 1309 (As Tournefortia argentea)

Marinelli, J. (Ed), 2004, Plant. DK. p 470 (As Tournefortia argentea)

Martin, F.W. & Ruberte, R.M., 1979, Edible Leaves of the Tropics. Antillian College Press, Mayaguez, Puerto Rico. p 180 (As Tournefortia argentea)

Parham, B. E. V., 1972, Plants of Samoa. New Zealand Department of Scientific and Industrial Research. Information Series. No. 85 p 124 (As Messerschmidia argentea)

Riedl, 1997, Boragniaceae, Flora Malesiana Ser. 1 Vol 13 p 117 (As Tournefortia argentea)

Schatz, G.E., 2001, Generic Tree Flora of Madagascar. Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew and Missouri Botanical Garden. p 86 (As Tournefortia argentea)

Selvam, V., 2007, Trees and shrubs of the Maldives. RAP Publication No. 2007/12 p 168 (As Tournefortia argentea)

Sujanapal, P., & Sankaran, K. V., 2016, Common Plants of Maldives. FAO & Kerala FRI, p 274 (As Tournefortia argentea)

Suppl. pl. 133. 1782 ("1781") (As Tournefortia argentea)

Thaman, R. R., 1987, Plants of Kiribati: A listing and analysis of vernacular names. Atoll Research Bulletin No. 296 (As Tournefortia argentea)

Thaman, R. R., 1992, Batiri Kei Baravi: The Ethnobotany of Pacific Island Coastal Plants. Atoll Research Bulletin. No. 361. (As Tournefortia argentea)

Thaman, R. R, 2016, The flora of Tuvalu. Atoll Research Bulletin No. 611. Smithsonian Institute p 72 (As Tournefortia argentea)

Topp, J. M. W., 1988, An Annotated Check List of the Flora of Diego Garcia, British Ocean Territory. Atoll Research Bulletin No. 313 (As Tournefortia argentea)

Zeven, A. C. & de West, J. M. J., 1982, Dictionary of cultivated plants and their regions of diversity. Wageningen. p 51 (As Tournefortia argentea)

Zhu Ge-ling; Harald Riedl, Rudolf Kamelin, BORAGINACEAE, Flora of China (As Tournefortia argentea)

PROVIDED BY **Food Plants International**

French, B.R. & Maynard, A.R. Food Plants International Database. Food Plants International

LICENCE CC BY-NC-SA 3.0

ONLINE FACT SHEET https://www.echocommunity.org/en/resources/b693794c-750a-4783-ae13-c1ef573a90a5