PLANT FACT SHEET

Commelina benghalensis L.

GENUS *Commelina* **FAMILY** Commelinaceae

COMMON NAMES Dayflower, Tropical Spiderweed

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Rhizome, Roots, Vegetable

The young leaves are eaten cooked as a vegetable. They are also used as a potherb. They are also fried.
The leaves boiled in water and eaten mixed with salt and chilli peppers.
The seeds are ground into flour and made into bread.
The starchy rhizomes are cooked and eaten. Young ones are also eaten raw.
The young leaves can be stored for 4-5 days.

DESCRIPTION

A slender, juicy, creeping herb, often with hairs. It has underground branches, as well as branches on the ground surface. Plants continue to grow from year to year. Plants are only about 25 cm high but can spread quite widely. It has roots at the nodes. The leaves are oval, and pointed at both ends. They are wavy along the edge, and 4 to 7 cm long. The leaf clasps the stem. The flowers are blue, with three petals 3 to 4 mm long. The flowers are produced in the axils of the upper leaves during summer. The fruit have 3 cavities, with 2 seeds in 2 of them and one seed in the other. The seeds are about 2 mm long.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows most commonly in fertile soils under humid conditions throughout the tropics. It is common in waste places, near settlements, at low and medium altitudes throughout the islands of the Philippines. It grows from sea level to 2300 m altitude, in China. In Nepal it grows between 900-2000 m altitude. It grows in moist places. It grows in wetlands. It can grow in arid places. In Sichuan and Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Leaves are collected during the early flush of the rainy season.

NOTES

There are about 230 Commelina species.
It easily becomes established as a weed.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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