

***Eclipta prostrata* L.**

Asteraceae

Source of: mò hàn lián 墨旱莲

eclipta herb



Summary Description

Found in the Heliantheae tribe of the aster family, this plant also is used in Ayurveda and known as bhangra or babri (Hindi) and bhringaraja (Sanskrit). A full sun annual hardy to Zone 4. Tolerates some shade. The plants branch at the base and form a sprawling, 8-15 inch high, deep green mass with lance-shaped leaves. Small (0.3 inch diameter) disk flowers and then dark brown seeds ripen asynchronously throughout the season. The ripe seeds shatter easily and require patience to gather. Benefits from cool, moist conditions and composted soil. Give it an early start and harvest in midsummer before much flowering occurs.

Propagation

Needs light to germinate, surface sow and press seed into soil. Keep the surface of the medium moist, use bottom heat. Estimated time to germination 4 weeks. Remove flats from heat and keep cool with bright indirect light. The plants may re-seed in cool, moist conditions; thin to a 6-inch radius. Experiment with direct sowing if weed pressure is low.

Cultivation

Keep the patch weed-free to make harvest easier. Under optimal conditions the plants will form a solid mass by midsummer. One or more harvests per season are possible.

Harvest & Processing

If harvesting for regrowth, clip stems to 2 or 3 inches. Lay the harvested material flat in a tray, remove weeds and foreign matter, and dry at temperatures below 110°F until moisture levels are about 15%. Do not over-dry; the material should not be brittle.

References

Flora of China: http://www.efloras.org/florataxon.aspx?flora_id=2&taxon_id=200023875

Bensky *Materia Medica* page: 836

Synonym

E. alba (Linnaeus) Hasskarl



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Eclipta prostrata