Sida cordifolia L.

Family: Malvaceae

Linnaeus, C. von (1753) Species Plantarum 2: 684. Type: Habitat in India. Holotype: Herb. Linn. n. 866.12; LINN.

Common name: Goat's Horns; Sida; Flannel Weed

Stem

Usually flowers and fruits as a shrub about 1-2 m tall.

Leaves

Leaf blades about 2-7 x 1-3 cm, underside densely clothed in stellate hairs, stellate hairs also present on the upper surface of the leaf blade and petiole. Stipules linear, about 4-8 x 0.5 mm. Stem and twig bark strong and fibrous when stripped.

Flowers

Calyx about 6-8 mm long, outer surface clothed in erect, white hairs, inner surface also hairy but to a lesser extent and glandular. Petals about 8-10 mm long, glabrous except for the ciliate margins. Staminal filaments fused to form a tube-like androphore. Ovary 10-locular, style 10-branched.

Fruit

Fruit about 3-4 mm high and about 6-8 mm diam., consisting of a dry persistent calyx which encloses about 10 plumed nutlets each containing a brown seed. Each nutlet with two spines at the apex. Cotyledons folded, each cotyledon about as long as the radicle but much wider.

Seedlings

Cotyledons about 6-11 x 7-10 mm long, petioles 6-7 mm long, sometimes longer than the cotyledons. First pair of leaves almost orbicular, clothed in stellate hairs, leaf margin toothed. At the tenth leaf stage: leaf blade +/- cordate, quite densely clothed in stellate hairs on both the upper and lower surfaces. Stipules filiform, about 2-11 mm long. Stem bark strong and fibrous when stripped. Seed germination time 8 to 12 days.

Distribution and Ecology

An introduced species with a pantropic distribution, now naturalised in WA, NT, CYP, NEQ, CEQ and southwards as far as north-eastern New South Wales. Altitudinal range in northern Australia from near sea level to 800 m. Usually grows as a weed of agricultural land and waste places but also found in disturbed areas and along roads in rain forest, monsoon forest and vine thickets.

Natural History & Notes

This species may have medicinal properties.

This species is rich in mucilage and has been used in treating dysentery and fevers; the leaves can be used as a poultice for headaches and ulcers. Cribb (1981).

RFK Code

3403

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Leaves. © G. Sankowsky

Scale bar 10mm. © CSIRO

10th leaf stage. © CSIRO

Cotyledon stage, epigeal germination. © CSIRO

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