



Argemone mexicana



POPPY FAMILY

Papaveraceae

COMMON NAMES

English: Mexican poppy, Mexican thistle, prickly poppy

Indonesia: druju, celangkringan

Malaysia: chelang keriuhan, pokok popi

Myanmar: kye-ja

Philippines: kachumba, kasubang-aso, diluariu

Thailand: fin naam

Vietnam: cà dại hoa vàng, gai cua, mùi cua

DESCRIPTION

Annual, very spiny herb (up to 0.9 m high); stems exude a yellow sap when cut.

Leaves: Grey or bluish-green, with prominent white veins and yellow-midvein (5–22 cm long and 3–7 cm wide), deep lobed with sharp spines; leaves of *A. ochroleuca* Sweet. are a darker shade of green.

Flowers: Bright yellow (2.5–5 cm across) as opposed to pale yellow or creamy white in *A. ochroleuca*.

Fruits: Capsules (dry fruits that open at maturity), spiny, green turning brown as they mature, egg-shaped (2.5–4 cm long), splitting into 3–6 lobes releasing small black seeds (1.5 mm across).

ORIGIN

Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Florida (USA), Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela and the Caribbean.

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Accidentally as a contaminant.

INVADES

Roadsides, railway lines, disturbed land, wasteland, urban open space, fallow land, crops, managed pasture, riparian areas, gullies and dry river courses.

IMPACTS

Reduces plant diversity and has an inhibitory effect on the germination and seedling growth of vegetables (Hazarika and Sannigrahi, 2001). Weed residues may also affect the growth and development of bambara groundnut and sorghum (Karikari *et al.*, 2000). Ingestion of seeds by poultry can result in death, and grazing animals can be poisoned if the seeds are consumed in hay or chaff. Harvesting of crops in the presence of this weed can also result in injuries. Edible vegetable oil, either accidentally contaminated with *A. mexicana*, or intentionally adulterated by unscrupulous traders, has resulted in epidemic dropsy in India. An epidemic also occurred in South Africa following the contamination of wheat flour (Sharma *et al.*, 1999). *A. mexicana* has been identified as an important allergen in India (Singh and Kumar, 2004).



Argemone mexicana L.

