

EPAZOTE



FAMILY

Chenopodiaceae

BOTANICAL NAME

Dysphania ambrosioides L.
Mosyakin & Clemants

SPECIES

D. ambrosioides (Epazote)
D. ambrosioides (Oaxaca Red Epazote)
D. ambrosioides (Megbezorli-West African Epazote)

COMMON NAMES

Mexican tea, Wormseed,
Skunkweed, Jesuit's tea

Peter A. Y. Ampim and Dania Rivera-Ocasio

CULTIVATION

PERIOD

Can grow year round if growing conditions are suitable

PROPAGATION

Can be established by direct seeding or by transplanting. The seeds require light to germinate so direct seeding should be shallow. The seeds should be planted 0.2-0.6 cm. (1/16-1/4 in.) deep. Seeds can be planted at 6-10 kg/ha (5.3-8.9 lb/A). Seeds germinate 7-21 days after sowing. Plant 200 plants/m² (19 plants/ft²). Space plants 5-8 cm. (2-3 in.) apart.

GROWING CONDITIONS

Soil: Likes well drained soils. Soil pH: 5.2-8.3. Temperature: Requires between 15°C to 35°C (59-95°F) for optimum germination. Water requirements: Requires plenty of water during early growth. Tolerates drought after that. Plant in moderately fertile soil in a well aerated area.

CARING FOR THE GROWING PLANT

Fertilize as needed, water, keep weeds away. Prune central stem and flowers.

DAYS TO MATURITY

About 50 days after planting

HARVEST / YIELD POTENTIAL

Harvest bigger leaves and leave the rest for future harvests. Prune the tips of stems to promote development of younger leaves to produce a compact plant. It can produce 60 g. (2 oz.) per plant with a yield potential of 11.2 ton/ha (4.5 ton/A).

AREAS COMMONLY CULTIVATED

It is native to Central and South America but can grow in warm temperate, subtropical and tropical climates.

PLANT DESCRIPTION

Annual or short-lived erect perennial plant that grows up to 1 m (3 ft.) or taller and strongly odorous. Its stems can either be reddish, cream or green but it produces small yellow-greenish flowers.

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GROWING STEPS

Buy seeds from a reliable source and start seedlings indoors or in a greenhouse if you want to use seedlings to begin your garden. Prepare your site or containers. Plant when conditions are optimum in late spring or early summer. Water as needed. Feed moderately with fertilizer when plants are grown. Control weeds, diseases and insects. Harvest leaves when plant is grown.

POTENTIAL PESTS AND DISEASES

PESTS

Aphids, larvae of moths, flea beetles (Chrysomelidae), seed eating ground beetles (Carabidae) and leaf-mining larvae of Anthomyiid flies (Anthomyiidae)

DISEASES

Can be host of downy mildew (*Peronospora* spp.)

CULINARY USES

Dried leaves, flowers and seeds are used as condiments for soups and other dishes. Fresh leaves can also be use for tea.

NUTRITIONAL BENEFITS

Good source of fiber, vitamin A, B₁, B₂, B₃, B₆, B₉, C, and pantothenic acid. It also contains calcium, copper, iron, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, selenium, and zinc.

REPORTED HEALTH BENEFITS

Reduces flatulence, stomach discomfort, indigestion, cramps, and ulcers. Controls intestinal parasites. Prevents certain cancers, boosts metabolism, supports bone health, and protects the immune systems. It also helps with weight loss and minimize menstrual discomfort. Also commonly used externally to treat ulcers, eczema and erysipelas.

REFERENCES

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