

Botanic name : *Urena lobata* L. -- Sp. Pl. 2: 692. 1753 [1 May 1753] (IK)

Common name : Bur Mallow, Caesar Weed

Family : Malvaceae

Habitat : Terrestrial

Distribution : Native to India, China, and SE Asia. Now pan tropical weed often in invasive form. As an aggressive invasive, it is included in the Global Compendium of Weeds, and has been classified as a noxious weed in the USA, Fiji, and Cuba. As a fast-growing, the plant has the capacity to rapidly form dense patches and, occasionally, monospecific stands. This species spreads by seeds and produces fruits with hooked spines which easily attach to animal fur and/or people's clothing. The plant has high adaptive capability in wide range of soil types and habitats including disturbed forests, pastures, waste ground, swamps, riparian areas, coastal dunes, roadsides, and perennial crop plantations. In India, the weed is invasive in at least 11 states. Probably spread as a fibre crop and for its medicinal properties by European voyagers during the eighteenth century. More read: <https://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/55771>

Description : A fast-growing, spreading, branched shrub, erect, woody perennial; stems and leaves star-shaped (stellate) hairy; often many branched at the base; leaves simple, alternate, with the upper surface rough and the lower surface grayish, broadly ovate, often with 3-5 shallow, angular lobes at apex, up to 10 cm long; finely toothed at margins, heart shaped at bases; stipulate; flowers small, showy, hibiscus-like, solitary on short stalks in leaf axils, subtended by 5 basally united (involucral) bracts up to 0.7 cm; calyx 5-lobed, hairy; 5 petals, rose or pink, darker at the base, rounded, up to 1.5 cm long; stamens fused into an obvious pink column beneath a 5-lobed style; fruits capsule-small, barbed, spiny

Phytochemicals: Alkaloids, flavonoids, saponins and tannins. flavonoids and flavonoid glucosides from flowers, C27–C33 nalkanes, β -sitosterol and stigmasterol from the whole plant, imperatorin (a furocoumarin) from the root, mangiferin and quercetin from the aerial parts, unsaturated and cyclopropenoic fatty acids from the seeds, two tri-glycerides, namely - α -palmitoyl- β -linoleoyl- α' -linoleoyl glycerol and α -linoleoyl- β -linolenoyl- α' -oleoyl glycerol were isolated from the whole plant. Two triterpenoid saponins namely (-)-trachelogenin and clematoside-S

Medicinal/Economic uses : Antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, emollient (root infusion), hypolipidemic, antidiabetic, diuretic, refrigerant, styptic, vulnerary (leaves), vermifuge (seed decoction). Plant parts are used to treat colic (root decoction), toothache (twigs), cuts (bark), rheumatism, lumbago, skin diseases associated with pain and inflammation, enteritis, stomach-ache, diarrhoea and dysentery (dried root decoction). Boiled and crushed leaves are used as a poultice for bladder and intestinal inflammation while roots and leaves decoction is used to soften the skin. A decoction of the root is used to treat colds, goitre, indigestion, leucorrhoea, malaria, rheumatism and tonsillitis. A poultice of fresh leaves are employed in snake bites, bruises, and sprains. An infusion of the flowers is used as a gargle for aphthae and a sore throat. Economic- Known as 'Aramina fibre', the stem fiber is fine, lustrous and soft; comparable to jute, used for sacking cordage, coarse fabrics, ropes, hammocks, and good quality paper. Seeds are used for making soap.