



Lawsonia inermis

Family name: Lythraceae

Common name: Lythraceae

Local name: (الحنة), Henna)



Cultivated



Role in Biodiversity

Lawsonia inermis can grow forming dense thickets that can cause environmental degradation by out-competing and replacing native vegetation, mostly native vegetation on alluvial soils and in riparian zones. *Lawsonia inermis* removes a large quantity of nutrients from the soil.



Environment and Growing

Lawsonia inermis found in coastal secondary scrubs, along watercourses and in temporarily flooded riverbeds and riverine thickets. It grows well in heavy, fertile clay dry soils in full sun, but also adapts to poor, stony, and sandy soils.

Growth requirements:

- Temperatures range 35-45 °C
- Rainfall range 500-1500 mm
- PH range 4.3-8.



Reproduction and Communication

- *Lawsonia inermis* is propagated mainly by stem and branch cuttings.
- It is also propagated by seeds. It produces flowers all year round. Flowers are bisexual and self-pollinated and also pollinated by insects.
- Birds feed on the fruits and probably disperse the seeds.



Life span

The lifespan range of this plant is 12-25 (max. 40) years.

Size

Lawsonia inermis can grow between 1.8 to 7.6 metres.

Parts

Stems are much-branched, glabrous, unarmed when young, older plants with spine-tipped quadrangular branchlets.

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Leaves are opposite, entire and subsessile, elliptic to broadly lanceolate, 1.5-5 cm x 0.5-2 cm

Fruits are purplish, green, globose capsule, 4-6 mm long, 4.5-8 mm wide

Roots are tap system with many fibrous lateral roots.

Flowers are scented, numerous, in large pyramidal terminal cymes, white or red.

Seeds are 2-2.6 mm. long, 3 mm across, angular, with thick seed coat

INTRODUCTION

Perennial shrub

Lawsonia inermis, Henna, is a shrub or a small tree native to northern Africa, Asia, and northern Australia. It is distributed in semi-arid zones throughout tropical and subtropical regions. The plant is characterized by dense branches which end in thorns. It is used as a traditional medicinal plant. Its dried leaves are the source of the dye henna used to dye skin, hair and fingernails, as well as fabrics.

In Sudan, it was originally introduced but now almost naturalized. It is most common in Northern and Central states. It is grown in Al Damar in large schemes for commercial purpose. The leaves are the part used for making henna paste. Henna is one of the culturally important plants in Sudan, especially for married women.

LIVELIHOODS / CULTURE

Cultivation

- Henna is grown in Sudan by cuttings and usually harvested after six months, where the branches are cut at one level and the rest of the plant is left to continue growing
- The farmers beat the branches after drying them and collect the leaves and grind them to be ready to use.
- Henna powder is usually wrapped in different volumes depending on the markets needs.

Cultural Value

Henna is grown mainly for its dye.

- Henna is a sign of married women. Married women dye their hands and feet with henna.
- It is very important traditionally, used in marriage and circumcision ceremonies.
- It is widely cultivated as an ornamental and hedge plant

Medicinal and health uses

- Leaf paste is externally used the on feet for body cooling by the Kababeesh tribe in northern Sudan and Barti tribe in Fangoga area in Sinar state
- Leaf paste is externally used on hair to treat fungal infections by all of the tribes in the northern Sudan and Flata tribe in the Blue Nile state.

Cultural Expressions

- Henna day before marriage and circumcision ceremonies
- Songs: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DRYLfKnD3qk> (حننوه وفرحت امو)

THREATS

Lawsonia inermis is described according to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species as least concern. Regional threats for this species includes climate change and attacks by beetles, aphids, and bacteria.

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