



Sesamum indicum

Family name: Pedaliaceae

Common name: Pedaliaceae

Local name: (سمس) Simsim



Cultivated



Role in Biodiversity

- Because of its extensive root system, It provides valuable cover to the soil and has a positive effect on soil structure, moisture retention and tilth.
- Valuable green manure.
- Vigorously outcompetes weeds.
- Successfully reduce root-knot nematode populations in subsequent crops.
- Source of feed for songbirds, quail and doves.



Environment and Growing

Sesame is notable for its ability to grow under droughty conditions and in extreme heat. It grows well in deep, well-drained and fertile sandy loams.

Growth requirements:

- Optimum temperatures 24 – 27 °C.
- Rainfall per annum 500–650 mm.
- PH of 4.3 to 8.7.



Reproduction and Communication

- Flowers are bisexual.
- Flowers are mainly self-pollinated. Some cross-pollination may occur.
- Only flowers borne 30 to 60 cm off the ground develop into fruits.
- Seeds are produced in these capsules with about 70 seeds per capsule.



Life span

3-4 months

Size

0.5 to 2.5 m high

Parts

Usually singled stem.

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Roots are present between 20 to 50 cm deep, and root diameter up to 2 mm.

Leaves are opposite, broad lanceolate, 4-14 cm long with an entire margin.

Flowers are white, tubular, 3 to 5 cm long, with a four-lobed mouth.

Rectangular capsules, 2–3 cm long, 6–12 mm in diameter, with longitudinal ribs.

Seeds are flattened, pear shaped.

INTRODUCTION

Herb

Sesamum indicum, Sesame, is an annual herb domesticated for well over 5000 years. It is distributed in subtropical, tropical and temperate areas where it cultivated and naturalized mainly for its seeds. Sesame is one of the oldest known oilseed crops. This species is characterized by purple to light green, angular, and straight branching stem with a longitudinal furrow. Fruits are capsules that open when dry releasing 3 mm (0.1 inch) long seeds. Depending on the cultivar, seeds are white, brown, reddish, gray, or black.

In Sudan, Sesame is widely grown under rain fed conditions, mainly in Gadarif and Kordofan. Sesame is widely used in popular foods in Sudan, and its oil is considered the most important ingredient that Sudanese people eat in their daily food. It is also widely used in traditional medicine in Sudan.

LIVELIHOODS / CULTURE

Cultivation

Land preparation: A few weeks or days before planting seeds, farmers prepare the field. They begin by plowing the land manually using traditional tools, **wasoog**. Sometimes they use cows to help them pull a plough. They remove any previous agricultural residues and weeds from the field and design the irrigation canals depending on soil level. All community members usually participate in this step.

Seed sowing: When the soil is ready, farmers use simple tools, **seloka**, **toria**, and **jelamoy**, to make holes at equal intervals and use their hands to spread the seeds into these holes. All community members usually participate in this step.

Watering: Farmers depend on the flow of water from large canals connected to rivers on a slope, so the water flows into small streams using gravity. In case of water shortage, farmers use small pumps to help them lifting water from the main canals. In rain-fed agriculture, farmers do not use irrigation channels. The groundwater after rain is sufficient until harvest time. Men usually do this work.

Weeding: Weeding is done by hand using special tools, **malod**, **jeraya** and **hashasha**. All community members usually participate in this step.

Cutting/collection: Sesame is harvested manually using a knife or sickle while still green. The plant is placed in an upright position and supported on each other so that no amount of sesame is lost through the holes at the top of the fruits. Men usually do this work.

Threshing: This step is usually done manually. All community members usually participate.

Cleaning: The process of cleaning the seeds from the unwanted parts is performed by women. They often use sieves to get rid of impurities

Grain storing and distribution: The cleaned seeds stored in places in the house called **al suwaiba**. Or in store rooms which are usually made of brick, wooden roofs with small ventilation outlets.

Farmers use donkeys and **karoo** (a small two-wheeled cart pulled by a donkey) to distribute individuals' share of the crop. They also use **karoo** or lorries to transport the crop for sale in local markets. Men and young boys usually do this work.

Straw and field stubble: Straw is collected and stored for fodder or left in the field where crop cleaning take place for the animals to feed on. All these practices are usually shared between community members: men, woman and young boys who are usually relatives.

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Cultural Value

- Women mix sesame oil with honey wax and perfume to make a hair cream known as **karkar**.
- The tradition camel-driven oil mills are used to extract sesame oil in many areas in Sudan, such as Mazmoum and Agadi districts of the Blue Nile State and in the plains of Northern and Southern Kordofan states.
- Sesame candy, known locally as **simsimya** and **halawa molid**, is one of the popular sweets famous to be taken during celebrating the birth of the Prophet Muhammad (may God bless him and grant him peace).
- Sesame is an ingredient in many Sudanese foods and baked goods, such as cakes and falafel.

Medicinal and health uses

In many parts of Sudan, sesame oil is used as a medical treatment for:

- Chest infection, cough, joint pains as well as skin diseases.
- Bodily fatigue (sesame oil mixed with salt).
- Hair dandruff and fall.

Cultural Expressions

Song:

THREATS

- Climate change.
- Subjected to many plant diseases such as Phytophthora blight.

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