

# WILD FLOWERS IN SINGAPORE

Management in Landscaped Gardens



LET'S MAKE SINGAPORE OUR GARDEN

# WILD FLOWERS OF SINGAPORE:

## Management in Landscaped Gardens

This booklet attempts to document the diversity of wild flowers that can be found in Singapore's parks and gardens. It features clear photographs and plant descriptions written in simple language to help anyone quickly identify them.

For ease of reference, the plants in this booklet are generally categorised according to the predominant colour of their flowers. There are some plants that produce inconspicuous flowers, and they are categorised as such. Grasses and sedges are covered in a separate category on their own.

For each plant, the scientific name, selected common names, and family name are given. In addition, each plant is placed into one of three categories based on its origin. Plants that are 'Native' are those that are considered indigenous, or have been here for hundreds if not thousands of years. In contrast, 'Naturalised' consists of non-native plants which have formed self-sustaining populations in the wild. The third category, 'Currently undefined', includes plants that are mainly found in open, disturbed or man-made habitats, but for which we do not have sufficient biogeographic or historical information to consider them native or naturalised.

This booklet uses symbols to help users understand the growth habit of each plant, as well as some interesting uses or characteristics of the plant. Supplementing these symbols are notes on its habitat, descriptive characteristics, and ethnobotanical information, including reported medicinal uses. While this information has been compiled from reliable sources, it is intended for educational purposes only, and any medicinal information is not a substitute for medical advice or treatment. Readers should always consult medical professionals before using or consuming a plant for medicinal purposes.

Lastly, it is worth noting that many of these wild flowers can also pop up in landscaped gardens. While some will undoubtedly find them delightful additions to their garden, others may wish to manage their growth or remove them altogether since they may not fit into the design intent of the garden. Hence we have also included notes on how to best remove or manage them if undesired.

We hope that this booklet will enhance your enjoyment of the wild flowers in Singapore!

### PLANT HABIT



Climbers



Creepers



Herbaceous



Woody Shrubs

### PLANT USE/CHARACTERISTIC



Annual Plants



Aquatic Plants



Host Plants



Nectar Plants

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## *Acmella uliginosa*



### Common names:

Toothache Plant, Marsh  
Para Cress

### Family name:

Asteraceae (Daisy family)

### Status in Singapore:

Currently undefined, locally  
found in disturbed areas

### 🔍 Features

- 🍃 Grows abundantly on hillsides, rocky shores of rivers, roadsides, swamps and low-lying ground
- 🍃 A plant that grows up to 10–30 cm tall with an erect growth habit
- 🍃 Leaves are narrowly oval to egg-shaped, 1–8 cm long and up to 3 cm wide
- 🍃 Flowers are yellow and occur in long, slender, egg-shaped clusters
- 🍃 Fruits are black, hairy and about 2 mm long
- 🍃 Brightly coloured flowers produce nectar that attracts butterflies

### 🪴 Management

The plant has a taproot system, therefore it has to be manually removed together with the roots to prevent the plant from sprouting again.





## *Ludwigia octovalvis*



### Common names:

Mexican Primrose Willow

### Family name:

Onagraceae (Evening Primrose family)

### Status in Singapore:

Currently undefined, locally found in disturbed areas

## 🔍 Features

- 🍃 Occurs in moist or wet areas, such as paddy fields or near water bodies
- 🍃 Usually a robust, well-branched perennial herb which grows up to 3 m tall
- 🍃 Leaves are linear to egg-shaped
- 🍃 Flowers are yellow, and have four petals that are arranged in a cross-like pattern
- 🍃 Fruits are reddish brown, elongated seedpods that contain numerous seeds each
- 🍃 The plant is used in folk medicine to treat rheumatic pain due to its analgesic properties

## 🌱 Management

This species propagates itself by seeds and by sending out runners. To avoid spreading seeds inadvertently when removing it, place a bag over the plant before pulling it out. Also ensure that the runners are completely removed from the soil to prevent the plant from sprouting again.





## Melothria pendula



### Common names:

Guadeloupe Cucumber,  
Timun Tikus

### Family name:

Cucurbitaceae  
(Cucumber family)

### Status in Singapore:

Currently undefined, locally  
found in disturbed areas

### 🔍 Features

- 🍃 Normally found along roadsides, on marsh edges and in forests
- 🍃 An herbaceous vine with coiling tendrils that enable it to climb
- 🍃 Leaves are about 5 cm long and palmate with three to five lobes
- 🍃 Flowers are small, yellow, and cup-shaped with five lobes
- 🍃 Fruits are smooth, oblong to round, and hang down from the stem; they are green with lighter green spots when young, and gradually turn black as they mature
- 🍃 The fruits attract birds

### 🪴 Management

The plant spreads by seeds and is also able to root from broken pieces of its stems. Manually remove the whole plant and ensure no parts of the stems are left behind.





## Neptunia plena



**Common names:**  
Water Mimosa

**Family name:**  
Fabaceae (Pea family)

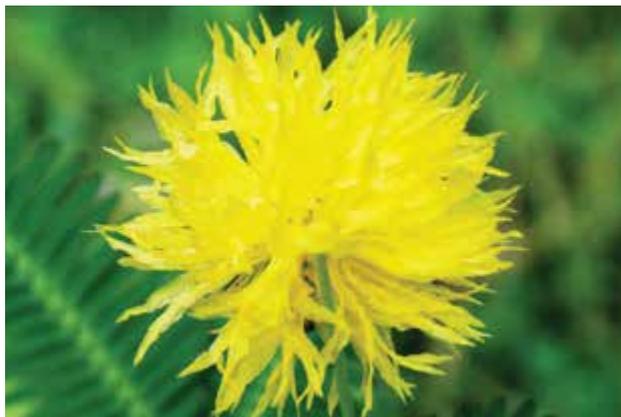
**Status in Singapore:**  
Naturalised

### 🔍 Features

- 🍃 Found in waterlogged areas, drains, freshwater marshes, ponds and other disturbed areas
- 🍃 A creeping and branching plant with an erect growth form, its stems have white spongy tissue that enable them to float on water
- 🍃 Leaves are compound (bipinnate), measure around 8 cm long and are sensitive to touch
- 🍃 Flowers are yellow and pom-pom-like clusters
- 🍃 Fruits are flat, oblong pods which split open when mature

### 🌱 Management

The plant has a taproot system. Manually remove it with the help of a screwdriver or hoe.





## *Portulaca oleracea*



### Common names:

Common Purslane, Beremi

### Family name:

Portulacaceae  
(Purslane family)

### Status in Singapore:

Naturalised

## 🔍 Features

- 🍃 Commonly grows in gardens, disturbed areas, and places with shallow media such as pavement cracks
- 🍃 A succulent herb with reddish stems and a prostrate growth habit, it can also grow upright in shady conditions
- 🍃 Leaves are fleshy and succulent, oval-shaped, and around 3 cm long
- 🍃 Flowers are small, yellow and have five petals
- 🍃 Fruits are small, green and egg-shaped, and contain numerous black seeds

## 🪴 Management

This species readily spreads by seeds. Pull out the plant manually or use a hoe to dig out the bigger plants. Care should be taken to avoid inadvertently spreading seeds while removing the plant.





## *Stylosanthes humilis*



**Common names:**  
Townsville Stylo

**Family name:**  
Fabaceae (Pea family)

**Status in Singapore:**  
Naturalised

### Features

-  Occurs on roadsides, open ground and disturbed areas
-  A usually erect plant that reaches up to 70 cm tall, it sometimes grows prostrate or close to the ground
-  Leaves are compound with three elliptical leaflets
-  Flowers are yellow to light orange, small and pea-shaped
-  The plant is tolerant of salt and heavy metals. It is also used as fodder for cattle in tropical climates

### Management

This plant has a taproot system and spreads readily via seeds. The prostrate stems will develop adventitious roots when in contact with moisture. Remove the whole plant including any parts of the stem that are rooted to the ground. Care should also be taken not to scatter the seeds when removing the plant.





## *Synedrella nodiflora*



**Common names:**  
Cinderella Weed,  
Rumput Babi

**Family name:**  
Asteraceae (Daisy family)

**Status in Singapore:**  
Naturalised

### Features

-  Abundant in lawns, parks and disturbed areas, such as roadsides, around buildings and in wastelands
-  A plant that grows upright and can reach a height of 80 cm
-  Leaves are elliptic to egg-shaped, and around 4–10 cm long, with finely toothed margins
-  Flowers are yellow and very small

### Management

Although it is very shallow-rooted, the plant is usually strongly branched. Manually remove the whole plant before flowers set seeds.





## *Tridax procumbens*



### Common names:

Coat Buttons,  
Kanching Baju

### Family name:

Asteraceae (Daisy family)

### Status in Singapore:

Naturalised

### 🔍 Features

- 🍃 Abundant in park areas, along roadsides and open grounds
- 🍃 An herb with creeping stems up to 50 cm long
- 🍃 Leaves are egg-shaped to narrowly oval and have an irregular, deeply toothed margin
- 🍃 Flowers appear in a daisy-like inflorescence, with a yellow centre consisting of disk florets surrounded by five white ray florets
- 🍃 Fruits are dry, brown and oblong-shaped. They are covered in silky hairs and have a feathery appendage for dispersal via wind
- 🍃 The plant is sometimes used as rabbit feed

### 🌱 Management

Manually remove the whole plant before flowers set seeds.





## Alternanthera sessilis



**Common names:**  
Joyweed, Keremak

**Family name:**  
Amaranthaceae  
(Amaranthus family)

**Status in Singapore:**  
Currently undefined, locally  
found in disturbed areas

### 🔍 Features

- 🍃 Occurs in roadsides, gardens and swampy areas
- 🍃 A plant with a prostrate growth form and stems that can reach 45 cm long
- 🍃 Leaves are oblong to lance-shaped, 1–8 cm long and up to 2 cm wide
- 🍃 Flowers are small, white, stalkless and nestled nestled in the leaf axils
- 🍃 Fruits are egg-shaped, dark brown and tiny, measuring 2–2.5 mm wide

### 🌱 Management

Manually remove the plant by the roots.

### ➕ Additional Note

There is also a cultivar of this species that occurs in Singapore, **Alternanthera sessilis 'Red'**. The two plants can be distinguished by these characteristics:

- 🍃 The leaves of *A. sessilis* are green while those of the 'Red' cultivar are dark purplish red
- 🍃 The flowers of *A. sessilis* are white, while those of the 'Red' cultivar are white to reddish-pink

Please see page 25 for a description of *A. sessilis* 'Red'.



## *Asystasia gangetica* ssp. *micrantha*



**Common names:**  
Chinese Violet

**Family name:**  
Amaranthaceae  
(Amaranthus family)

**Status in Singapore:**  
Naturalised

### Features

-  Occurs in roadsides, forest edges and disturbed areas
-  A perennial herb that grows up to 50 cm tall with horizontal stems that form mats
-  Leaves are egg-shaped, paired, 2.5–8 cm long and 1.5–4 cm wide
-  Flowers are small, white and tubular, and consist of two lips; the upper lip has two lobes while the lower lip has three lobes and dark purple markings
-  This species is a host plant for the following butterflies: Jacintha Eggfly (*Hypolimnas bolina jacintha*), Autumn Leaf (*Doleschallia bisaltide*) and Blue Pansy (*Hypolimnas orithya wallacei*)

### Management

Seeds are contained inside capsule-like fruits that, after reaching maturity, eject the seeds when lightly touched. For best management, entire plants should be removed before the flowers set seeds.





## *Eclipta prostrata*



**Common names:**  
False Daisy

**Family name:**  
Asteraceae (Daisy family)

**Status in Singapore:**  
Naturalised

### Features

-  Occurs near rivers, ponds and roadsides
-  An annual herb that grows up to 60 cm tall with erect or horizontal stems
-  Leaves are lance-shaped, papery, and densely covered in stiff or soft hairs; they are about 3–10 cm long and 0.5–2.5 cm wide
-  Flowers occur in tiny daisy-like heads that are about 6 mm across

### Management

Manually remove the plant by the roots before flowers set seeds.





## *Gomphrena celosioides*



**Common names:**  
Bachelor's Button

**Family name:**  
Amaranthaceae  
(Amaranthus family)

**Status in Singapore:**  
Currently undefined, locally  
found in disturbed areas

### Features

-  Occurs near streams, disturbed areas and lawns
-  An annual or a short-lived perennial herb with a prostrate growth habit
-  Leaves are elliptical with smooth edges, 3–4 cm long and around 1 cm wide, and occur in pairs
-  Flowers are white and occur in clusters that are around 1 cm wide and initially round but gradually lengthen to 3–4 cm long
-  Fruits are roundish and each contains one brown, glossy seed about 1.5 mm long

### Management

Manually remove the plant by the roots.





## *Ipomoea aquatica*



### Common names:

Water Spinach,  
Kangkong

### Family name:

Convolvulaceae  
(Morning Glory family)

### Status in Singapore:

Currently undefined,  
sometimes cultivated

### Features

-  Abundant in moist or waterlogged areas, or anchored to the banks of streams and lakes
-  A plant with long stems that can reach 3 m long
-  Leaves are smooth and arrow-like, around 5–15 cm long and 2–6 cm wide
-  Flowers are funnel-shaped, white or light pink to purple; however, this plant seldom flowers
-  Leaves and younger stems are consumed as leafy vegetables

### Management

Remove the whole plant manually — care must be taken not to allow any sections of the stems to remain as the plant can regenerate from the broken pieces easily.





## *Justicia procumbens*



**Common names:**  
Water Willow

**Family name:**  
Acanthaceae  
(Acanthus family)

**Status in Singapore:**  
Currently undefined, locally  
found in disturbed areas

### Features

-  Occurs in grasslands, open fields, abandoned areas and along roadsides
-  An annual herb that grows up to 0.5 m tall with stems that lie along the ground
-  Leaves vary in shape from oval to elliptical, and are 1.5–4 cm long and up to 1.5 cm wide
-  Flowers are small, pink or white and have two lips; the upper lip has one lobe and the lower lip has three lobes with red markings
-  Fruits split open when mature and contain four tiny, egg-shaped seeds each

### Management

Manually remove the plant by the roots.





## *Legazpia polygonoides*



### Common names:

Malayan Eyebright,  
Kerak Nasi

### Family name:

Linderniaceae (Malayan  
Eyebright family)

### Status in Singapore:

Currently undefined, locally  
found in disturbed areas

### 🔍 Features

- 🍃 Occurs in shady, wet areas in lawns and can be found from low elevations to mountain valleys
- 🍃 A creeping herb with papery, hairless leaves
- 🍃 Leaves are egg-shaped to elliptical or rhomboid-shaped with a toothed margin, and 1–2 cm long
- 🍃 Flowers are white, have two lips, and occur in clusters; the upper lip is red with yellow in the middle, while the lower lip is divided into three white lobes
- 🍃 Fruits are oblong to egg-shaped capsules up to 8 mm wide

### 🪴 Management

Manually remove the plant by the roots.





## *Lindernia rotundifolia*



### Common names:

Baby's Tears

### Family name:

Linderniaceae (Malayan  
Eyebright family)

### Status in Singapore:

Currently undefined, locally  
found in disturbed areas

## 🔍 Features

- 🍃 Usually occurs near streams and waterlogged areas
- 🍃 A partially or totally submerged aquatic plant
- 🍃 Leaves are small, round to egg-shaped, and occur in pairs that are perpendicular to one another
- 🍃 Fruits are ellipsoid-shaped capsules up to 2.5–3 mm long



## 🌱 Management

Manually remove the  
plant by the roots.

## ⊕ Additional Note

There is another similar  
looking species that occurs  
in Singapore, ***Lindernia  
crustacea***. The two plants  
can be distinguished by  
these characteristics:

- 🍃 The flowers of *L. rotundifolia* are predominantly white with bright blue to purplish spots, while those of *L. crustacea* are purplish white.

Please see page 38 for a  
description of *L. crustacea*.



## *Mikania micrantha*



### Common names:

Mile-A-Minute Weed,  
Selaput Tunggul

### Family name:

Asteraceae (Daisy family)

### Status in Singapore:

Naturalised

## Features

-  Occurs in a wide variety of habitats but most commonly in moist to wet areas along rivers, ponds and lakes
-  Leaves are heart-shaped and around 4–13 cm long
-  Flowers are small, white-cream, and arranged in large, loose clusters
-  Fruits are somewhat flattened and elliptic, with a tuft of white hairs on one end
-  The flowers of this species attract butterflies, who visit them for nectar

## Management

This species is very 'aggressive' and fast growing, hence the common name of 'Mile-A-Minute Weed'. It produces numerous seeds that are dispersed by wind, or sometimes by clinging onto clothing or bags. Regular monitoring for this species is recommended so that it can be quickly removed and prevented from smothering any nearby plants.





## *Oldenlandia corymbosa*



**Common names:**  
Old World Diamond-  
Flower

**Family name:**  
Rubiaceae  
(Coffee family)

**Status in Singapore:**  
Naturalised

### Features

-  Occurs in disturbed areas, grasslands and paddy fields
-  An annual herb that grows up to 0.4 m tall with prostrate or erect stems that are square in cross-section
-  Leaves are narrowly lance-shaped or narrowly elliptic with smooth edges, and occur in pairs
-  Flowers are small, white, and have four narrowly ovate petals and four stamens each
-  Fruits are round to egg-shaped capsules with evenly distributed 'horns'

### Management

Manually remove the plant by the roots.





## *Passiflora foetida*



**Common names:**  
Wild Water Lemon

**Family name:**  
Passifloraceae  
(Passion Flower family)

**Status in Singapore:**  
Naturalised

### Features

-  Occurs along roadsides, streams or rivers, and in disturbed areas, fields, coastal areas and forests
-  A climbing species with stems that are 1.5–6 m long
-  Large, hairy leaves are usually tri-lobed and produce an unpleasant odour when crushed
-  Flowers are fragrant and white with a ring of purple streaks; they open in the morning and close by noon
-  Fruits are surrounded by finely dissected, hairy bracts, and they ripen orange to red. The unripe fruits are toxic whereas the fully ripened fruits are edible

### Management

Manually remove the plant by the roots.





## *Spermacoce exilis*



### Common names:

Pacific False Buttonweed

### Family name:

Rubiaceae (Coffee family)

### Status in Singapore:

Currently undefined, locally found in disturbed areas

### 🔍 Features

- 🍃 Occurs in disturbed areas and tropical moist forests at low elevations
- 🍃 An annual herb that grows up to 0.3 m tall and has a creeping to slightly ascending growth habit
- 🍃 Leaves are ovate or elliptic to oblong with an entire margin, up to 30 mm long and 4–15 mm wide
- 🍃 Flowers are small, white, and arranged in a cluster between the uppermost pair of leaves

### 🌱 Management

Manually remove the plant by the roots.





## *Spermacoce ocymoides*



**Common names:**  
Purple-leaved Button  
Weed

**Family name:**  
Rubiaceae (Coffee family)

**Status in Singapore:**  
Naturalised

### Features

-  Occurs in disturbed areas, open fields, marsh areas, and along canals
-  An erect or spreading annual herb that grows up to 0.6 m tall
-  Leaves are broadly elliptical or lance-shaped and green to partially or completely dark purple
-  Flowers appear in clusters near where the leaves attach to the stem; each flower is small, white and tubular with four pinkish lobes

### Management

Manually remove the plant by the roots.





## *Alternanthera sessilis* 'Red'



### Common names:

Red Sessile Joyweed,  
Bayam Keremak Merah

### Family name:

Amaranthaceae  
(Amaranthus family)

### Status in Singapore:

Currently undefined,  
sometimes cultivated

## Q Features

- Occurs in damp areas, such as along rivers, streams, canals, ditches, and ponds, and can sometimes be found floating on water bodies
- A perennial creeping herb up to 0.5 m tall that often produces roots at nodes along the stems
- Leaves are reddish purple and narrowly oval in shape
- Flowers are small, white to reddish pink, and found in pompom-like clusters
- Used in folk remedies to make a herbal tea



## 🌱 Management

Manually remove the whole plant before it flowers and sets seeds. Ensure that all the stems are removed as detached stems that have already rooted will grow into new plants.

## ⊕ Additional Note

In addition to this cultivar, the species also occurs in Singapore, ***Alternanthera sessilis***. These two plants can be distinguished by these characteristics:

- The leaves of *A. sessilis* 'Red' are dark purplish red while those of the species, *A. sessilis*, are green
- The flowers of *A. sessilis* 'Red' are white to reddish pink, while those of the species are white

Please see page 12 for a description of *A. sessilis*.



## *Alysicarpus vaginalis*



### Common names:

White Moneywort,  
Alyce Clover,  
Akar Seleguri

### Family name:

Fabaceae (Pea family)

### Status in Singapore:

Currently undefined, locally  
found in disturbed areas

## Features

-  Occurs in gardens, lawns and wastelands, and along roadsides and footpaths
-  A small creeping herb
-  Leaves are oval to oblong-elliptic, and green with a whitish streak along the mid-vein
-  Flowers are pea-like, and reddish yellow or light purple
-  The long, thin seedpods are 1–2.5 cm long, and have four to seven segments
-  The flowers attract butterflies

## Management

Manually remove the plant by the roots before flowers set seeds.





## *Euphorbia hirta*



### Common names:

Hairy Spurge,  
Ara Tanah

### Family name:

Euphorbiaceae  
(Spurge family)

### Status in Singapore:

Naturalised

### Features

-  Can be found in a wide variety of habitats, including gardens, wastelands, and along roadsides
-  An erect or prostrate herb that can grow up to 0.5 m tall
-  Leaves are elliptical to narrowly oval, have toothed margins, and are opposite one another along the stem
-  Flowers are small, light pink, and occur in roundish, button-like heads between the leaf pairs
-  Fruits contain reddish brown seeds

### Management

The plant has a tap root. Manually remove the plant with the help of a screwdriver or hoe.





## Phyllanthus urinaria



### Common names:

Chamber Bitter,  
Leafflower, Dukong Anak

### Family name:

Phyllanthaceae  
(Leafflower family)

### Status in Singapore:

Naturalised

## Q Features

- Occurs in a wide variety of habitats, but mostly found in sunny, moist locations, and in gardens, lawns and flowerbeds
- A plant that grows up to 60 cm tall
- Leaves are small, oblong, and arranged on opposite sides of the stems in a fern-like pattern
- Flowers are tiny and whitish, and can be found underneath the leaves
- Fruits are fleshy, round, and reddish brown in colour, with a rough and bumpy surface



## 🌱 Management

For gardens and flowerbeds, mulching can be used to control this species as the seeds require light for germination. Plants should also be removed by their roots before they set seed.

## ⊕ Additional Note

There is a similar looking species that occurs in Singapore, **Phyllanthus amarus**. The two species can be distinguished by these characteristics:

- The overall plant size, as well as the leaves of *P. urinaria* are larger than *P. amarus*.
- The fruits of *P. urinaria* are warty while those of *P. amarus* are smooth.

Please see page 42 for a description of *P. amarus*.



## *Cyanthillium cinereum*



### Common names:

Little Ironweed

### Family name:

Asteraceae (Daisy family)

### Status in Singapore:

Currently undefined, locally found in disturbed areas

### 🔍 Features

- 🍃 Occurs in open or disturbed areas, roadsides and gardens
- 🍃 A plant that grows up to 1 m tall
- 🍃 Leaves are egg- to diamond-shaped and around 3–6.5 cm long and 1.5–3 cm wide
- 🍃 Flowers are light purple to reddish purple and occur in clusters that are tightly enclosed by green, triangular bracts and resemble the tip of a paintbrush
- 🍃 Fruits are cylindrical, about 2 mm long, contain a single seed each, and are attached to a tuft of hair
- 🍃 This species is wind dispersed

### 🪴 Management

Manually remove the plant by the roots.





## *Desmodium heterophyllum*



**Common names:**  
Variable-leaf Tick Trefoil

**Family name:**  
Fabaceae (Pea family)

**Status in Singapore:**  
Currently undefined, locally found in disturbed areas

### Features

-  Occurs in grasslands, lawns and fields, as well as along roadsides and rivers
-  A creeper that spreads across the ground and produces roots at the nodes along the stems
-  Leaves are compound with three oval to obovate leaflets which have a smooth margin and a slight notch at the tip
-  Flowers are pink, pea-like and 3–5 mm long
-  Fruits are short pods with wavy margins, and measure 1.2–2.5 cm long



### Management

Manually remove the plant by the roots. It produces roots at the nodes of the stems, so the entire plant must be removed for effective control.

### Additional Note

There is a similar looking species that occurs in Singapore, ***Desmodium triflorum***. The two species can be distinguished by these characteristics:

-  The young stems of *D. heterophyllum* are red and hairy, while those of *D. triflorum* tend to be green and smooth
-  The leaves of *D. heterophyllum* are much larger than those of *D. triflorum*

Please see page 31 for a description of *D. triflorum*.



## Desmodium triflorum



**Common names:**  
Creeping Tick Trefoil

**Family name:**  
Fabaceae (Pea family)

**Status in Singapore:**  
Currently undefined, locally found in disturbed areas

### 🔍 Features

- 🍃 Occurs in lawns and gardens, along roadsides, and in other disturbed areas
- 🍃 A perennial with creeping stems that can reach 50 cm long
- 🍃 Leaves are compound with three triangular leaflets, the middle of which reaches up to 0.6 cm long
- 🍃 Flowers are red, pink or purple, and can occur singly or in clusters of up to five flowers
- 🍃 Fruits are seedpods that are slightly curved, hairy and measure up to 1.3 cm long



### 🌱 Management

Manually remove the plant by the roots.

### ⊕ Additional Note

There is a similar looking species that occurs in Singapore, **Desmodium heterophyllum**. The two species can be distinguished by these characteristics:

- 🍃 The young stems of *D. triflorum* tend to be green and smooth, while those of *D. heterophyllum* are red and hairy
- 🍃 The leaves of *D. triflorum* are much smaller than those of *D. heterophyllum*

Please see page 30 for a description of *D. heterophyllum*.



## *Emilia sonchifolia*



**Common names:**  
Cupid's Shaving Brush

**Family name:**  
Asteraceae (Daisy family)

**Status in Singapore:**  
Currently undefined, locally found in disturbed areas

### Features

-  Occurs in wastelands, fields, grasslands and plantations
-  An erect annual herb that grows up to 1.5 m tall
-  Leaves are opposite, linear to lanceolate or triangular in shape, and usually have a toothed margin and irregular lobes
-  Flowers are purple and produced in clusters
-  In most Southeast Asian countries, the leaves are consumed as a vegetable

### Management

Manually remove the plant by the roots.





## *Mimosa pudica*



**Common names:**  
Sensitive Plant

**Family name:**  
Fabaceae (Pea family)

**Status in Singapore:**  
Naturalised

### Features

-  Common in disturbed areas, lawns, and roadsides
-  A sprawling plant that can grow up to 50 cm tall, with sharp prickles along the stems
-  Leaves are compound, and the leaflets fold up when touched and at night
-  Flowers are pale violet to pink and arranged in egg-shaped clusters that are 1–1.3 cm long and 0.6 cm–1 cm wide
-  Fruits are segmented seedpods that are about 1.8 cm long and 3–5 mm wide

### Management

Manually remove the plant, taking care to avoid the prickles along the stems.





## *Strobilanthes reptans*



**Common names:**  
Redflame

**Family name:**  
Acanthaceae  
(Acanthus family)

**Status in Singapore:**  
Naturalised

### Features

-  Occurs in lawns, roadsides, along streambanks, and near ponds
-  A small herb that grows up to 0.15 m tall
-  Leaves are oblong-lance shaped or elliptic, around 2–6 cm long and 1–3 cm wide, and have rounded teeth along the margin; they are silvery on the upper surface and purplish below
-  Flowers are white to light purple with purple markings, and are around 1.2 cm long
-  Fruits are capsules that are 1 cm wide and split open to release the seeds when ripe

### Management

Manually remove the plant by the roots.





## Cleome rutidosperma



**Common names:**  
Fringed Spider Flower

**Family name:**  
Capparaceae  
(Cleome family)

**Status in Singapore:**  
Naturalised

### 🔍 Features

- Occurs along roadsides, in gardens, disturbed areas, occasionally on trees as an epiphyte, and on stone walls or embankments
- An erect or spreading herb that grows up to 1 m tall
- Leaves consist of three elliptic to narrowly oval leaflets
- Flowers have four purple petals that gradually fade to pink or light purple, point upwards and are arranged in a fan-like pattern
- Fruits are dry, cylindrical, and 2.5–7.5 cm long and 0.2–0.5 cm wide
- This is a host plant for the Striped Albatross (*Appias libythea olferna*), the Pysche (*Leptosia nina malayana*) and Cabbage White (*Pieris canidia canidia*)

### 🌱 Management

Manually remove the plant by the roots before flowers set seeds.





## *Commelina diffusa*



### Common names:

Spreading Dayflower,  
Rumput Aur

### Family name:

Commelinaceae  
(Spiderwort family)

### Status in Singapore:

Currently undefined, locally  
found in disturbed areas

### 🔍 Features

- 🍃 Occurs in moist or waterlogged areas, gardens, wastelands and disturbed areas
- 🍃 A plant with a scrambling growth habit that produces roots at the nodes along the stems
- 🍃 Leaves are narrowly ovate and 4–6 cm long
- 🍃 Flowers are small, bright blue, and have three triangular petals with wavy margins
- 🍃 Fruits are dry and measure about 5 mm long

### 🌱 Management

Manually remove all the plant parts as they easily regenerate from any loose or broken pieces that are left behind.





## *Lindernia antipoda*



### Common names:

Sparrow False Pimpernel

### Family name:

Linderniaceae (Malayan  
Eyebright family)

### Status in Singapore:

Currently undefined, locally  
found in disturbed areas

### 🔍 Features

- 🍃 Occurs in moist, waterlogged and swampy areas
- 🍃 A small creeping plant that forms dense mats, grows up to 0.3 m tall and produces roots at the nodes along the stems
- 🍃 Leaves are oblong to narrowly egg-shaped, and measure 0.8–4 cm long and 0.6–2 cm wide
- 🍃 Flowers are small, trumpet-shaped, white to varying shades of purple, and have two lips; the upper lip has two lobes and the lower lip has three lobes

### 🪴 Management

Manually remove the plant by the roots before flowers set seeds.





## *Lindernia crustacea*



### Common names:

Malaysian False  
Pimpernel, Akar  
Kerak Nasi

### Family name:

Linderniaceae (Malayan  
Eyebright family)

### Status in Singapore:

Currently undefined, locally  
found in disturbed areas

## 🔍 Features

- 🍃 Occurs in moist or swampy areas
- 🍃 A creeping plant that branches towards the base of the stems and forms a dense mat, it produces roots at the nodes along the stems
- 🍃 Leaves are green, sometimes tinged with purple, egg-shaped to narrowly oval, and measure 1–2.5 cm long and 0.5–1.5 cm wide
- 🍃 Flowers are trumpet-shaped, purplish white, and have two lips; the upper lip has two lobes and the lower lip has three lobes



## 🌱 Management

Manually remove the plant before it sets seeds. It roots easily from the nodes of the stems, so the entire plant must be removed for effective control.

## ⊕ Additional Note

There is another similar looking species that occurs in Singapore, ***Lindernia rotundifolia***. The two plants can be distinguished by these characteristics:

- 🍃 The flowers of *L. crustacea* are purplish white, while those of *L. rotundifolia* are predominantly white with bright blue to purplish spots.

Please see page 19 for a description of *L. rotundifolia*.



## *Plectranthus monostachyus*



**Common names:**  
Monkey's Potato

**Family name:**  
Lamiaceae (Mint family)

**Status in Singapore:**  
Currently undefined, locally found in disturbed areas

### Features

-  Occurs in moist areas
-  A plant that grows up to 1 m tall, with erect stems that are square in cross section
-  Leaves are egg-shaped with rounded teeth along the margin
-  Flowers are small and purplish pink
-  Fruits are 1 mm wide, and contain four round, flattened nutlets each

### Management

Manually remove the plant by the roots before flowers set seeds.





## Ruellia repens



**Common names:**  
Creeping Ruellia,  
Akar Keremak

**Family name:**  
Acanthaceae  
(Acanthus family)

**Status in Singapore:**  
Currently undefined, locally  
found in disturbed areas

### 🔍 Features

- 🍃 Occurs in grasslands, roadsides, lawns and disturbed areas
- 🍃 A small, creeping herb
- 🍃 Leaves are opposite, egg-shaped to narrowly oval, 1.4–4 cm long and 0.8–2 cm wide
- 🍃 Flowers are funnel-shaped, white or pink to light purple, and 1.2–2 cm wide
- 🍃 Fruits are about 1.2 cm long and ripen to brownish yellow
- 🍃 This is the host plant of the Peacock Pansy (*Junonia almana javana*), Chocolate Pansy (*Junonia hedonia ida*), and the Pygmy Grass Blue (*Zizula hylax pygmaea*)

### 🌱 Management

Manually remove the plant by the roots before flowers set seeds.





## *Peperomia pellucida*



### Common names:

Shiny Bush,  
Tumpangan Air

### Family name:

Piperaceae  
(Pepper family)

### Status in Singapore:

Naturalised

### Features

-  Found in many areas such as gardens, wastelands and even crevices in concrete structures or footpaths
-  A plant that can grow up to 40 cm tall
-  Leaves are shiny, broadly egg-shaped to triangular, and are 1–3.5 cm long and up to 3.5 cm wide
-  Flowers are very tiny and loosely arranged in a tail-like spike
-  Fruits are round, tiny, and black when mature

### Management

Remove the plant by the roots – care should be taken to avoid inadvertently spreading seeds while removing the plant.





## *Phyllanthus amarus*



### Common names:

Carry Me Seed,  
Dokong Anak

### Family name:

Phyllanthaceae  
(Leafflower family)

### Status in Singapore:

Naturalised

### 🔍 Features

- 🍃 Found in dry fields, along roadsides, wastelands, and other disturbed areas
- 🍃 An erect herb which grows up to 0.3 m tall
- 🍃 Leaves are arranged oppositely on either side of the stems
- 🍃 Flowers are star-shaped, about 2 mm wide, and appear along the stem underneath the leaves
- 🍃 Fruits are green and smooth
- 🍃 The plant is used in folk medicine as it is believed to have antibacterial, anti-inflammatory and anti-diabetic properties



### 🌱 Management

Manually remove the whole plant before flowers set seeds.

### ⊕ Additional Note

There is a similar looking species that occurs in Singapore, ***Phyllanthus urinaria***. The two species can be distinguished by these characteristics:

- 🍃 The leaves and overall plant size of *P. amarus* are smaller than those of *P. urinaria*.
- 🍃 The fruits of *P. amarus* are smooth while those of *P. urinaria* are warty.

Please see page 28 for a description of *P. urinaria*.



## *Pilea microphylla*



**Common names:**  
Artillery Plant

**Family name:**  
Urticaceae (Nettle family)

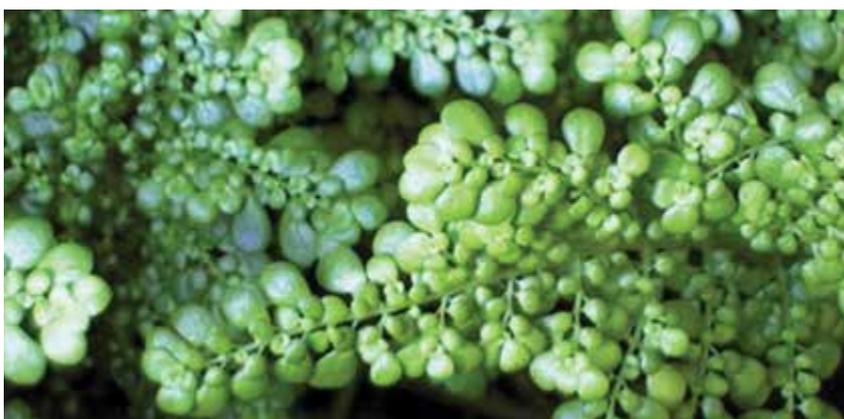
**Status in Singapore:**  
Naturalised

### Features

-  Occurs in moist or wet soils, rock crevices, shaded areas, and along pavements
-  A low growing succulent which has a spreading growth habit and appears somewhat fern-like
-  This species can grow up to 30 cm tall and form mats 60 cm wide
-  Leaves are egg-shaped with the wider end at the tip and lime to dull green in colour
-  Flowers are green and very tiny
-  This plant is sometimes grown as a ground cover, especially in moist, shady areas

### Management

Manually remove the plants as they appear – regular weeding is required to keep this species in check as it can grow rather quickly and will produce numerous seeds.





## *Chrysopogon aciculatus*

### Common names:

Love Grass, Golden False  
Beardgrass, Temuchut

### Family name:

Poaceae (Grass family)

### Status in Singapore:

Native

### Features

-  Occurs in sunny, dry, exposed areas such as roadsides, lawns, pastures and wastelands
-  A perennial grass that grows fast and spreads quickly via rhizomes
-  Leaves are linear, 3–15 cm long and 0.2–0.6 cm wide
-  Flowers are reddish purple and found in branched inflorescences that measure 5–10 cm long

### Management

Manually remove the plants by their roots before they flower and set seeds.





## *Cyperus rotundus*

### Common names:

Purple Nutsedge, Rumpup  
Haliya Hitam

### Family name:

Cyperaceae  
(Sedge family)

### Status in Singapore:

Currently undefined, locally  
found in disturbed areas

### 🔍 Features

- 🍃 Occurs in a wide variety of habitats, such as roadsides, gardens, wastelands, as well as riverbanks
- 🍃 A grass-like plant that has an underground network of tubers, fibrous roots and wiry rhizomes
- 🍃 Leaves are up to 60 cm long and 7 mm wide
- 🍃 Flowers are purplish brown and occur in spikes that reach up to 60 cm tall; the flower stems are triangular in cross-section
- 🍃 Fruits are dry and contain a single seed each

### 🌱 Management

The plant has an extensive system of underground tubers. Manually remove the plant by digging up all the tubers and roots.





## *Eleusine indica*

### Common names:

Indian Goosegrass,  
Rumput Sambau

### Family name:

Poaceae (Grass family)

### Status in Singapore:

Naturalised

### Features

-  Occurs along roadsides, disturbed areas, wastelands, and cultivated land
-  A tufted grass with a prostrate and spreading or erect habit that can reach up to 60 cm tall
-  Leaves are narrow and linear, and may be flat or folded
-  Flowers occur on flattened stems that are erect or lie parallel to the ground

### Management

This plant has a large and extensive root system, and should be removed manually with the help of a screwdriver or hoe.





## *Fimbristylis dichotoma* ssp. *dichotoma*

### Common names:

Tall Fringe Rush,  
Rumput Purun Batu

### Family name:

Cyperaceae  
(Papyrus family)

### Status in Singapore:

Currently undefined, locally  
found in disturbed areas

### Features

-  Occurs mainly in moist or waterlogged areas such as paddy fields, grasslands and marshes
-  A grass-like, tufted plant that grows that up to 0.8 m tall, and has fibrous roots and short rhizomes
-  Leaves are green to bluish green, flat, linear, and measure 1–2.5 mm wide
-  Flowers are reddish brown

### Management

Manually remove the plant by the roots before flowers set seeds, and ensure that all the rhizomes are removed from the soil.





## *Imperata cylindrica*

### Common names:

Lalang, Alang-alang

### Family name:

Poaceae (Grass family)

### Status in Singapore:

Currently undefined, locally found in disturbed areas

### Features

-  Occurs near streams, disturbed areas and cultivated fields
-  A tall grass that grows up to 2 m tall
-  Leaves are about 180 cm long and 2.5 cm wide, erect, and emerge from the stem bases
-  Flowers are tiny, have two orange stamens and one purple stigma, and are arranged in pairs within plume-like spikes that are white, hairy, and about 30 cm long

### Management

Manually remove this species and take care to fully remove the rhizomes, as new plants can regenerate from pieces left behind. Remove before it sets seeds. The leaves have rather stiff edges and may cause scratches and itching. It is best to wear clothing with long sleeves, and to put on gloves when handling this plant.





## *Ischaemum ciliare*

### Common names:

Batiki Blue Grass,  
Rumput Gerek Telinga

### Family name:

Poaceae (Grass family)

### Status in Singapore:

Currently undefined, locally  
found in disturbed areas

### 🔍 Features

- Occurs in open, disturbed areas such as roadsides, parks, gardens, footpaths and wastelands
- A grass that grows up to 1 m tall and forms large stands
- Leaves are linear, and 5–30 cm long and 2–10 cm wide
- Flowers are held in spikelets that are covered in silky reddish hairs that gradually turn grey

### 🌱 Management

The wind-dispersed seeds can remain viable in the soil for a long time; it is thus best to manually remove the plant by the roots before flowers set seeds.





## *Kyllinga nemoralis*

### Common names:

White Kyllinga

### Family name:

Cyperaceae  
(Sedge family)

### Status in Singapore:

Currently undefined, locally found in disturbed areas

### 🔍 Features

- 🍃 Found in a wide variety of habitats, such as wet grasslands, farmland, gardens, lawns, plantations and roadsides
- 🍃 A sedge that grows up to 0.5 m tall
- 🍃 Leaves are narrow and linear, 1.5–3 mm wide, and have brown to purple-brown leaf sheaths
- 🍃 Flowers are white and appear in pompom-like inflorescences 5–10 mm wide; below the inflorescence, there are three to four leaf-like, linear bracts of unequal size up to 20 cm long
- 🍃 Fruits are small and shaped like a lens

### 🌱 Management

Manually remove this plant, taking care to fully remove the rhizomes as new plants can regenerate from pieces left behind.





## *Melinis repens*

### Common names:

Red-top, Natal Grass

### Family name:

Poaceae (Grass family)

### Status in Singapore:

Naturalised

### Features

-  Occurs in open or disturbed areas, moist soil and waterlogged areas
-  A spreading or tufted perennial grass with erect culms that grow up to 60 cm tall, it forms a dense mat, especially when regularly cut or grazed
-  Leaves are narrowly oval and grow up to 20 cm long
-  Flowers are found in paired racemes that measure about 2–10 cm long
-  This plant can be used as forage and groundcover to reduce erosion

### Management

Manually remove the plant by the roots and stolons before it flowers and set seeds.





## *Paspalum conjugatum*

### Common names:

Buffalo Grass,  
Rumput Kerbau

### Family name:

Poaceae (Grass family)

### Status in Singapore:

Naturalised

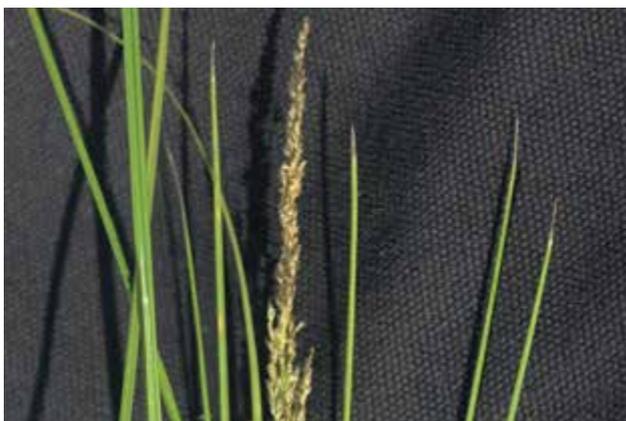
### Features

-  Occurs in lawns, fields and grassy verges
-  A creeping perennial grass that spreads by long above-ground stolons that root at the nodes
-  Leaves are about 1 cm wide and up to 20 cm long
-  Flowers are found in erect stems that are brownish, measure 30–80 cm tall, and have two 'branches' that form a 'V' shape

### Management

The plant spreads by both stolons and seeds. Manually remove the whole plant before flowers set seeds.





## *Sporobolus fertilis*

### Common names:

Giant Parramatta Grass

### Family name:

Poaceae (Grass family)

### Status in Singapore:

Native

### Features

-  Abundant in disturbed sites, wastelands, grasslands, pasture areas and wetlands
-  A clumping grass that grows up to 1.6 m tall
-  Leaves can be up to 50 cm long and around 0.5 cm wide, and sometimes appear 'rolled up' as the leaf margins curl inwards
-  Flowers occur in overlapping branches that are held close to the main stem, which can reach up to 50 cm long

### Management

This species produces numerous tiny seeds that can stick to fur, clothing and vehicles. They can also be dispersed by flowing water. Care should be taken to avoid dispersing seeds while removing the plant.

## CREDITS

This guidebook would not be possible without the efforts of Hort Champs and Hort Buddies who have contributed in one way or another to our wild flower surveys over the years.

The content was put together by Jennie Tang, Pauline Tay, Shi Biying, Tamako Kobayashi, Lily Chen, Soh Weijing and Evelyn Chong, with assistance from Nanthini Elamgovan, Siti Rafe'ah Omer, Victoria Cheong, Ada Davis and Felix Siew.

All photos were obtained from NParks Flora&FaunaWeb. For more information on wild flowers in Singapore, please visit NParks Flora&FaunaWeb at [florafauanaweb.nparks.gov.sg](http://florafauanaweb.nparks.gov.sg).

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