

*Bidens pilosa*

[Synonyms : *Bidens abortiva*, *Bidens alausensis*, *Bidens chilensis*, *Bidens leucantha* var. *pilosa*, *Bidens leucanthus*, *Bidens odorata*, *Bidens pilosa* var. *alausensis*, *Bidens pilosa* var. *bimucronata*, *Bidens pilosa* var. *minor*, *Bidens pilosa* var. *pilosa*, *Bidens pilosa* var. *radiata*, *Bidens pilosus*, *Bidens pilosus* var. *albus*, *Bidens scandicina*, *Bidens sundaica* var. *minor*, *Coreopsis leucantha*]

**BLACKJACK** is an annual. Native to tropical America, including the Caribbean, it has small, yellow centred, white to pale yellow or purplish flowers.

It is also known as *Aiguille* (French), Beggar-ticks, Blackjack, Bur marigold, Cobbler's peg, Donkey lover, Duppy needles, *Dvouzubec chlupatý* (Czech), *Gyinantwi* (Twi), Hairy beggarticks, *Hareuga* (Sundanese), *Herbe-z'aiguilles* (French), *Hereuga* (Indonesian), *Jarongan* (Javanese), *Kancing baju* (Malay), Margarita, *Mucege* (Kikuyu), *Nålskåra* (Swedish), *Phutium* (Gujarati), *Pilipili* (Hawaiian), Railway daisy, Shepherd's needle, Spanish needle, Sweethearts, *Wal-te-kola* (Sinhalese), *Weichhaariger Zweizahn* (German), and *Zegwi* (Creole).

*Pilosa* is derived from Greek *pilo-* (felt) component meaning 'covered with long soft hairs'.

Not only is this a bee plant but also, in the Philippines, it has been used to make wines eg.

*Tafei*, *Sinitsit*. In parts of Asia the leaves have also been used as a substitute for tea.

Young leaves have been harvested and cooked like spinach (*Spinacia oleracea*) for a vegetable for human consumption in Java (now an Indonesian island) and parts of west Africa. In parts of the Philippines the flowers have been included as an ingredient in rice balls (*Oryza*).

Blackjack has been fed to pigs in South Africa and has also provided fodder generally.

Medicinally, the leaf juice has been used in the Caribbean (and west Africa and tropical Asia) as a remedy for eye inflammations, in Martinique it has been prepared as a tea taken to treat colds and some urinary difficulties, and in Africa the juice has been used on cuts and also for curing earache. The roots have been employed locally, in Kenya, to treat liver disorders, and in Malaysia an infusion of the plant has provided a treatment for coughs. In Asia also the leaves and the flower heads (rubbed on the gums) have been used to ease toothache.