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Gossypium herbaceum

[Synonyms : *Gossypium hirsutum*, *Gossypium prostratum*, *Gossypium punctatum*, *Gossypium stocksii*]

LEVANT COTTON is a biennial or perennial. Native to Africa it has purple-centred, yellow flowers.

It is also known as African-West Asian cotton, *A la bo mian* (Chinese), *Algodão herbáceo* (Portuguese), *Algodoeiro-asiático* (Portuguese), *Algodón* (Spanish), *Algodonero* (Spanish), *Algodonero herbáceo* (Spanish), Arabian cotton, *Baumwolle* (German), *Cao mian* (Chinese), *Cotone a fibra corta* (Italian), *Cotonnier Africain* (French), *Cotonnier herbacé* (French), Cotton root, *Darkhte punbah* (Persian), *Fai* (Thai), *Gossipion to podes* (Greek), Hairless cotton, *Hatthi* (Kannada), *Hatti* (Kannada), Indian cotton, *Indisk bomuld* (Danish), Iraqi cotton, *Janivara hattimara* (Kannada), *Kapaas* (Nepalese), *Kapas* (Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Marathi), *Karbasam* (Tamil), *Karpasam* (Tamil), *Karpasamu* (Telugu), *Karpasa* (Sanskrit), *Karpasah* (Sanskrit), *Karpasaha* (Sanskrit), *Karpasi* (Sanskrit), *Karppas* (Malayalam), *Karppasi* (Malayalam), *Karuparutti* (Malayalam), *Krautiger Baumwollstrauch* (German), *Kurupparutti* (Malayalam), Levant cotton, Maltese cotton, *Naaduhatthi* (Malayalam), *Nattupparutti* (Tamil), North African cotton, *Pannipparutti* (Malayalam), *Parutti* (Tamil), *Patti* (Telugu), *Podes vamvaki* (Greek), *Prathi* (Telugu), *Pratti* (Telugu), *Qoton Malti* (Maltese), *Rui* (Hindi, Urdu), Short staple cotton, Syrian cotton, *Talipparutti* (Tamil), *Tula* (Bengali), *Vamvaki podes* (Greek), *Venparutti* (Tamil), and *Xiao mian* (Chinese).

Oil is extracted from the seeds.

Herbaceum means ‘herbaceous or not woody’.

In the *Book of Esther* in the *Bible* the description of the palace at Susa (or Shushan) in today’s Iran includes mention of curtains made from Levant cotton – a rarity at that time and thus evidence of wealth.

The oil has been used in cooking and also in pharmaceutical products and cosmetics.

For some areas the seeds are prized as an aphrodisiac.

The plant came to be known to some North American Indian tribes and the Koasati used a root decoction to ease childbirth.

Medicinally, herbalists have used the leaf juice to treat scorpion stings and snake bites, and the seeds have been employed for abortions and headaches.