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Pilea microphylla

[Synonyms : *Dubrueilia microphylla*, *Parietaria microphylla*, *Pilea microphylla* var. *longifolia*, *Pilea muscosa*, *Pilea portula*, *Pilea serpyllacea*, *Pilea succulenta*, *Urtica microphylla*, *Urtica serpyllacea*]

ARTILLERY PLANT is a succulent annual or perennial. Native from Mexico to Brazil it has small succulent leaves and minute whitish-pink flowers.

It is also known as Artillery fern, Gunpowder plant, *Katumpangan* (Malay), Lace plant, Pistol plant, Rockweed, and *Teigne* (Guadeloupe, Martiniquais).

Microphylla is derived from Greek *micro-* (small) and *phyllo-* (leaf) components.

The common name Artillery plant is an apt inference for its habit. When the flowering plant is touched or shaken the stamens burst open and expel a cloud of pollen.

Artillery plant is familiar in Malaysian gardens as an ornamental plant – but in many parts of Asia it is viewed as a weed, while for experts on south-eastern Asia its medicinal properties are considered to be its greatest value in the region as a whole.

Medicinally, the plant has been used in Chinese medicine (for instance records note that a plant decoction has been made for treating fluid retention). Then neighbouring its native habitat it seems that the plant has been used to treat asthma in Jamaica, bowel disorders in Barbados and diarrhoea in children in the Grenadine Islands.