

Xanthium strumarium

[Synonyms : *Xanthium canadense*, *Xanthium natalense*, *Xanthium orientale*, *Xanthium pungens*, *Xanthium sibiricum*]

ROUGH COCKLEBUR is an annual. Native to southern Europe it has white and greenish flowers.

It is also known as *Arishta* (Sanskrit), *Banokra* (Bengali), *Bardana menor* (Portuguese, Spanish), *Bardane minore* (Italian), Beach clotbur, Broad cockle-burr, *Buah anjang* (Malay), Bur-thistle, Burweed, Butter bur, Button-bur, *Cacamwci Lleiaf* (Welsh), *Chhota-gokhuru* (Hindi), Clotbur, Cocklebur, Cockle-burr, Common cockle-burr, Dike bur, *Färggullfrö* (Swedish), *Grapille* (French), *Gullfrö* (Swedish), *Herbe-aux-écrouelles* (French), *Kachab* (Thai), *Kankerroos* (Afrikaans), *Kharaq el bahr* (Arabic), *Lanetsuru* (Kashmiri), *Lappola* (Italian), Large cockle bur, Lesser burdock, Louse-bur, *Marlumutta* (Tamil), *Marulutige* (Telugu), *Řepeň durkoman* (Czech), Sea burdock, Sheepbur, Small burdock, *Stekelnoot* (Dutch), *Sungtu* (Punjabi), and *Voškovník obyčajný* (Slovak).

Warning – contact with the plant can cause dermatitis. Seeds encased in the burrs, and young seedlings, consumed in large amounts can be fatally poisonous for animals which normally avoid it because of the prickles. The prickles can also cause painful physical injury. (Although no records of animal deaths exist in Britain they have been recorded in the United States.)

Rough cocklebur can be confused with lesser burdock (*Arctium minus*).

Strumarium means ‘with cushion-like swellings’.

In North America some Indian tribes ate the seeds raw or as an ingredient in a dish.

Some of the Dakota Indian tribe used the plant during ceremonial rituals.

Rough cocklebur also provided some North American Indian tribes with medicines. While the Costanoans used a seed decoction to treat some urinary difficulties, some of the Paiute Indians rubbed the burrs on painful or bleeding gums.

The leaves yield a yellow dye.

Medicinally, in India the root has been used to treat some cancerous diseases, and the plant has been employed in remedies for malaria. (In northern India fruit garlands are hung round the necks of babies suffering from eye diseases.) It has been an ingredient in Chinese medicine for hundreds of years.