

Alectra vogelii

Recognize the problem

Family: Scrophulariaceae (figwort family)

Common names: yellow witchweed, cowpea witchweed, Vogel Alectra

Chichewa: Kaufiti wa mbeu za mgulu la nyemba

Annual, broadleaved, parasitic herb (30-45 cm high) associated with legume hosts. Stems hairy, single or branching near soil level, leafy when flowering resembling free living plants, bright orange stems attached to host roots.

Leaves: 1.5- 3.5 cm long, 0.3 to 1.5 cm wide, very hairy with variable shape, sharp teeth (none up to six, up to 3cm long) along leaf edge.

Flowers: Singly on short stems in the axils of upper leaves; flowers bell-shaped, pale yellow, sometimes with three deep red veins.

Fruits: Withered flowers covering developing round capsule (5 mm when mature).

Seeds: Tiny and dust-like; high seed production and long lived seed bank.

Background

Origin: Most likely western Africa.

Introduction: As a seed contaminant.

Habitat: Widespread in semi-arid savannahs of sub-Saharan Africa, the principle habitat is cultivated, agricultural land.

Spread: Seeds spread by wind, water, soil, man, machinery, vehicles or as crop seed contaminant.

Invades: Legume crops, particularly cowpea, groundnut, bambara and soybean, occasionally found associated with weeds of fallows.

Impacts: This weed is a serious constraint to the production of grain legumes. Affected crop plants appear wilted before the parasite emerges, their flowering is delayed and the number of flowers and pods is reduced. Crop yield losses of 20-100% have been reported from Kenya, 15% in groundnut from Nigeria and 30-50% in bambara from South Africa. *Alectra vogelii* is a constraint to common bean production in the Blantyre Shire Highlands, Malawi. The weed is common in Lilongwe, Dowa and districts in central Malawi, the lower lying, drier areas of the southern region, and the Blantyre/Shire Highlands.

Alectra vogelii is very leafy when flowering, resembling free living plants. (Photo by Charlie R. Riches, CABI CPC)



Yellow flowers on stems arising from axils of upper leaves. (Photo by Charlie R. Riches, CABI CPC)



Scientific name(s) > *Alectra vogelii*

The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: All Countries



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