

TRAILING FUZZYBEAN

Strophostyles helvula (L.) Ell.

Plant Symbol = STHE4

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Alternate Names

Wild bean, sand bean, trailing bean, trailing wildbean, pink wild bean

Uses

Ethnobotanic: The Houma, Choctaw, Iroquois, and other Native American tribes used trailing fuzzybean for food as well as various medicinal uses. The Choctaw would boil and mash the roots for food. The Houma combined trailing fuzzybean with Cassia Tora (Indian Coffee) to make a tea for treating typhoid. The Iroquois treated poison ivy and warts by rubbing the whole leaves on the affected areas.

Wildlife: Bobwhites, quail and turkeys are among the birds that feed on the seeds of trailing fuzzybean.

Other: In areas where it is adapted, the trailing fuzzy bean is used in reseeding mixtures, to prevent erosion.

Status

Please consult the PLANTS Web site and your State Department of Natural Resources for this plant's current status (e.g. threatened or endangered species, state noxious status, and wetland indicator values).

Description

General: Legume Family (Fabaceae). Trailing fuzzybean is a native, herbaceous annual vine. The plant has a fuzzy stem from 1-3 m in length. Young stems are erect and become trailing or twining as they grow. Leaflets are 2-5.5 cm long and ovate to ovate-oblong in shape. The leaves can often have three lobes. The purple-pea flowers are borne at the top of long, naked stalks. Blooms fade with time to include shades of green. The flowers are 8-13mm long. The long, fuzzy pods (4-10 cm long) contain several pubescent seeds that are black and shiny with removal of the fuzzy outer coat. The plants bloom from summer to fall. The seed pods shatter, dispersing the seeds, when the seeds are ripe.

Distribution: For current distribution, please consult the Plant Profile page for this species on the PLANTS Web site.

Habitat: Trailing fuzzybean can be found along the banks of rivers, in damp thicket, in open woodlands, low places between coastal dunes, fields, abandoned cropland and roadsides.

Adaptation

Trailing fuzzybean is a "pioneer" plant, which is often found colonizing open sites in either moist or dry conditions. Although it prefers sandy soils, it can be found on a wide range of medium to fine-textured upland soils.

Establishment

Seeds may be planted in April or May. You may plant trailing fuzzybean in the same manner as any garden bean.

Cultivars, Improved, and Selected Materials (and area of origin)

These plant materials are not generally available from commercial sources. Seed from the "Hopefield selection," developed for erosion control, is available from the USDA-NRCS Jamie L. Whitten Plant Materials Center, Rt. W Box 215-A, Coffeetown, Mississippi 38922 (Tel. 601 675-2588). Contact your local Natural Resources Conservation Service (formerly Soil Conservation Service) office for more information. Look in the phone book under "United States Government." The Natural Resources Conservation Service will be listed under the subheading "Department of Agriculture."

References

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For more information about this and other plants, please contact your local NRCS field office or Conservation District, and visit the PLANTS Web site <<http://plants.usda.gov>> or the Plant Materials Program Web site <<http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov>>

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