



Sauropus Androgynus 'Katuk'

Sauropus androgynus, also known as katuk, star gooseberry, or sweet leaf, is a shrub grown in some tropical regions as a leaf vegetable.

Plant Highlights

- Tasty protein rich leaves
- Edible flowers
- Annual in the North
- Can produce in the shade

It is one of the most popular leaf vegetables in South Asia and Southeast Asia and is notable for high yields and palatability. The shoot tips have been sold as tropical asparagus. In Vietnam, the locals cook it with crab meat, minced pork or dried shrimp to make soup. In Malaysia, it is commonly stir-fried with egg or dried anchovies. The flowers and small purplish fruits of the plant have also be eaten. In Indonesia, the leaves of the plant are used to make infusion, believed to improve the flow of breast milk for breastfeeding mothers.

It also has high level of provita-min A carotenoids, especially in freshly picked leaves, as well as high levels of vitamins B and C, protein and minerals. The more the leaves mature, the higher the nutrient content of the leaves.

There is a premium market for the tender shoots, even the flowers, small fruit and seeds of the Katuk. The flavor is said to be like that of a pea with a bit of a nutty flavor.

Soil: Reported to tolerate acid soils, our soil is circum-neutral and they like it. We recommend lime just in case.

Water: Needs plenty, can tolerate brief flooding. Cannot tolerate dry.

Sun: Prefers shade, but can probably tolerate full sun if given plenty of water.

Cold: Will freeze in the winter, but should come back from the stump.

Pruning: Keep pruned to 3-6 feet tall.

Propagation: Easily propagated by cuttings of older wood stems. Strip the leaves and stick it in the ground in the shade.

Pests: None known.

Other problems: Tends to grow tall and lanky and then fall over. Growth slows in the winter and the taste is poor until it resumes vigor with warm weather.

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