Eryngium foetidum L.

English Names: Fitweed, Culantro, Long coriander, Mexican coriander, Spiny coriander

Malayalam Names: African-malli, Malli cheera

Description:

An erect biennial herb 15-40 cm tall, strongly aromatic, its odour similar to that of coriander with furrowed stems, a short rootstock and fibrous roots. Leaves oblanceolate-oblong in outline, 4-12 cm long and 1-2.5 cm wide, apex obtuse, margins crenate to finely spinosely serrate, base cuneate, sessile and glabrous. Flowers greenish, borne in dense, rounded cymes; involucral bracts 5-7, linear-lanceolate, 1-3 cm long and 3-7 mm wide, greatly exceeding the flower heads, leaf-like, spreading and reflexed with a few spiny teeth; flower heads cylindrical, 4-10 mm long and 3-5 mm broad, terminal on the branches or on short peduncles in the forks, sepals erect, lanceolate, longer than the petals, persistent, apex acute; petals greenish-white, oblanceolate to obovate, erect, clawed. Fruit globose or ovoid, 1-1.5 mm long, compressed, densely papillose.

Distribution: Indigenous to Tropical America; introduced and sometimes cultivated in Tropical Africa and Tropical and Subtropical Asia

Uses:

Eryngium foetidum is considered a versatile species due to its diversified uses in ethnomedicine, gastronomy, and pharmaceutical industry. It is species is widely used as a flavoring condiment in beans, meat, and fish, and in the preparation. In traditional medicine, it has analgesic, antibacterial, and antipyretic applications. The chemical profile is characterized by the presence of aromatic and aliphatic aldehydes, mainly (2E)-2-dodecenal in leaves and 2,3,4-trimethylbenzaldehyde in roots, in addition to fixed compounds such as carotenoids, flavonoids, and phenols. These compounds have shown diverse biological activities and potential antibacterial, anthelmintic, and antioxidant applications, confirming their potential for use in folk medicine. Therefore, it is inferred that this aromatic plant has vast potential uses and is an important alternative as a natural resource for the food and pharmaceutical industries in view of its antioxidant capacity and bioactive compounds.