

Launaea cornuta

Family: Asteraceae

Species: *Launaea cornuta* (Hochst. ex Oliv. & Hiern.) C. Jeffrey

Common Names: wild lettuce; moleita and malot (Sudan)

Synonyms:

Sonchus cornutus Hochst. ex Oliv. & Hiern (basionym)

Sonchus exauriculatus O. Hoffm. Oliv. & Hiern (basionym)

Sonchus bipontini var. *exauriculatus* Oliv. & Hiern. (basionym)

Sonchus kabarensis De Wild. (basionym)

Launaea exauriculata (Oliv. & Hiern.) Amin ex Boulos

Bayer Code: LNECO

Description: An erect perennial with hollow stems up to 1.5 m high and creeping rhizomes. Leaves form a rosette at the base, alternate on the stem, sessile, up to 25 cm long by 3 cm wide, entire or with two to three pairs of lobes acute-pointed near the base. Inflorescence large, diffuse with numerous flower heads on peduncles about 2.5 cm long. Involucre up to 10 mm long by 4 mm across, glabrous or shortly pubescent, phyllaries in two to three rows, 2–4 mm long outside, up to 10 mm long inside. Florets 10–25, yellow up to 15 mm long, ligule often reddish outside. Seeds pale brown, elliptical, ribbed, 2–4 mm long with white pappus 5 mm long.



Figure 1. *Launaea cornuta* from Blundell (1992)

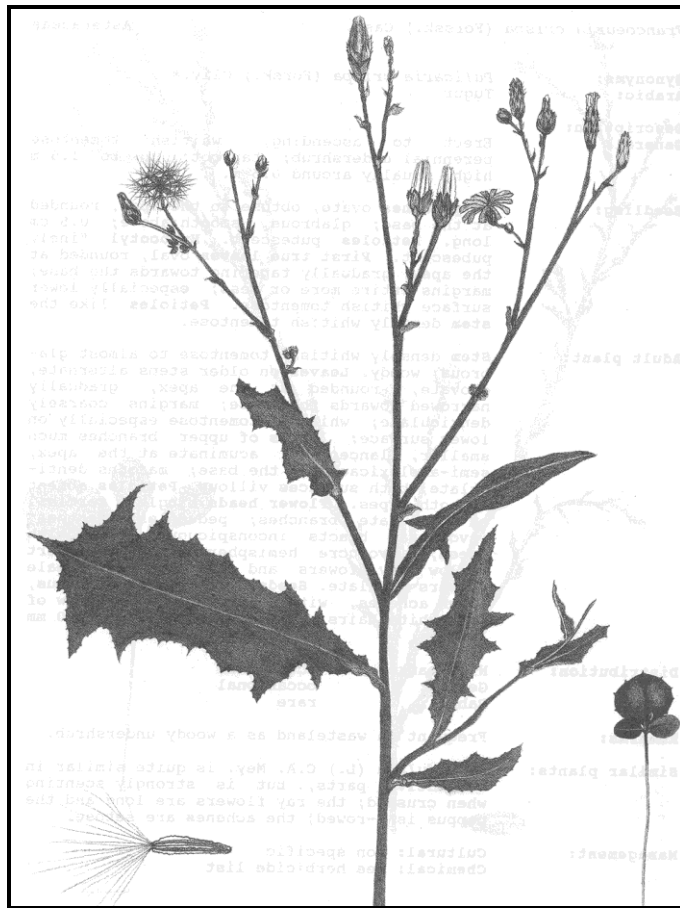


Figure 2. *Launaea cornuta* from Braun (1991)

Distribution: *Launaea cornuta* is native in Africa (Cameroon, Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zaire, Zambia, and Zimbabwe) (NGRP, 2002; Blundell, 1992; Holm et al., 1979; Jeffrey, 1966; Pope, 1992; Reed, 1977).

Native and Naturalized Distribution of *Launaea cornuta* (Oliv. & Hiern.) C. Jeffrey

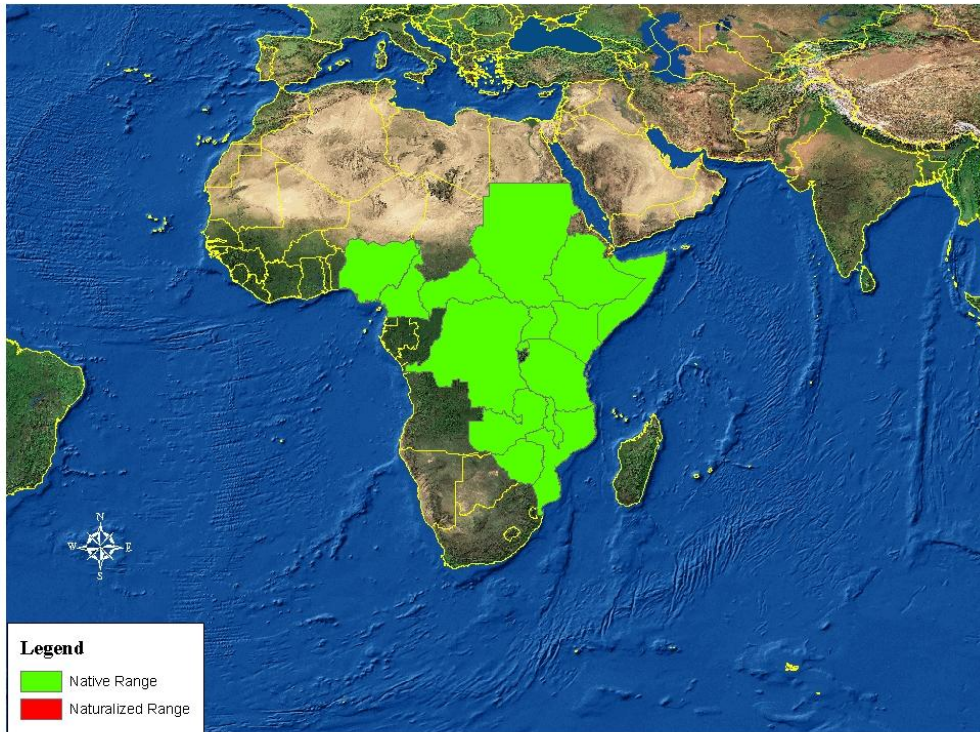


Figure 3. By Glenn Fowler, USDA APHIS PPQ CPHST, 2002 (Fowler, 2002)

Biology and Ecology: *Launaea cornuta* occurs on alluvial soils, in cultivated areas, including irrigated crops, on roadsides near rivers, grassland, and bush vegetation. A single plant can cover a large area as a result of spread by rhizomes. It may be used as a salad in Sudan (Braun, 1991). *Launaea cornuta* can become a dominant weed in a range of semiarid subtropical ecologies.

Possible Pathways to the United States: Because *Launaea cornuta* occurs as a crop weed in a large number of African countries, there is a significant risk of accidental introduction with crop seed or other agricultural produce.

Adverse Impact: Because *Launaea cornuta* is known to occupy agricultural and natural areas, it poses a significant threat to the United States.

Literature Cited:

- Blundell, M. 1992. Collins Photo Guide to the Wild Flowers of East Africa
HarperCollins, London. 464 pp.
- Braun, M. 1991. Common Weeds of Central Sudan. Verlag Josef Margraf, Weikersheim,
Fed. Rep. of Germany. 329 pp.
- Fowler, G. 2002. Distribution Map. USDA, APHIS, PPQ, Center for Plant Health Science
and Technology, Raleigh, NC.
- Holm, L. G., J. V. Pancho, J. P. Herberger, and D. L. Plucknett. 1979. A Geographical
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- Reed, C. F. 1977. Economically Important Foreign Weeds: Potential Problems in the United States. Agricultural Research Service, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Washington, DC. 746 pp.