



Kuth-Saussuria costus

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Kuth-Saussuria costus Syn. *S. lappa* (Decne.) Sch. Bip. Family: Asteraceae (Compositae) Vernacular name : Kuth Kashmiri name: Kuth Kuth (*Saussuria costus*) is a perennial root crop and belongs to the family Compositae. It is cultivated in Kashmir. It is an important cash crop of the Kashmir valley. Distribution : Western Himalayas all along in temperate conditions. Botanical features : Perennial herb. Stem upto 2m, generally unbranched. Basal leaves long stalked, pinnate with a large triangular terminal lobe upto 30 cm across. Stem leaves smaller, irregularly toothed. Flower-heads in dense rounded terminal clusters, purplish in colour. Involucral bracts numerous, rigid with twisted and recurved tips. Achenes upto 5 mm long., obovate, shining. Medicinal uses: Root-Insect repellent, smoked as substitute for opium. Used in cough and asthma. The alcoholic extract useful in treatment of bronchial asthma particularly of vagotonic type. In Kashmir, US, Afghanistan, and IRAN the root oil is used to protect valuable garments from insect damage. Dried stems used as fodder in H.P. Soil : Well drained loam soil is the best for the cultivation of this crop. Its cultivation should be avoided on sloppy and stony field. Preparatory tillage : As recommended for wheat. Sowing and seed rate : The sowing of kuth should be done before the onset of winter season as the seed of this crop requires chilling for germination. Seed starts germination only after the melting of snow during April-May. Seed rate of 32 kg per ha is recommended. It should be sown by hand dibbling or kera in rows 23 cm apart. The seed should be dibbled 3-4 cm deep. Manuring : Apply 25 kg N, 25 kg P₂O₅ and 25 kg K₂O per hectare each year with first irrigation in May. This dose is to be applied for three consecutive years required for the crop to be matured. Irrigation : The crop requires frequent irrigations from May to September during all the three years. Interculture and weeding : Hoeing in May after each winter is necessary. In addition, 3 weeding are necessary in each year. Harvesting : The crop is ready for harvest at the end of the third year in September-October. Before harvesting the crop, irrigate the field thoroughly for ease in uprooting the roots with pick axes. After harvesting, the roots are cut in 7-10 cm pieces, dried for 2-3 weeks and cleaned thoroughly for storing and marketing. More details: cikashmir@gmail.com [1]

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