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Grewia tenax — A Potential New Small Fruit for the Sudan

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Abstract

Of the estimated one million plant species worldwide, only a minute fraction serves as food, medicinal and industrial sources. Most of these crops were domesticated thousands of years ago and have been the subject of much global interest in research and development. The remainder, which comprises a vast array of plant species, remains largely neglected, although they often play a major role in subsistence consumption and/or income for the rural populations. This may very well be the case with the small-leaved white crossberry, *Grewia tenax* (Forsk.) Fiori. It is a fruit-producing deciduous, tropical shrub or tree, widespread in semi-arid and sub-humid tropical climates. In spite of its potential, which is well recognized, commercial plantations in the Sudan are practically nonexistent. Wild plants are continuously being used to meet the growing commercial demand for the fruit. Recently, alternative and potentially high-value cash crops are being sought for their potential to help supplement the incomes of small farmers who are currently dependent upon growing and selling millets, sorghum, sesame and groundnut. *G. tenax*, has often been cited as prime candidate for domestication as a useful horticultural plant. One major factor hampering this development is the limited and scattered knowledge available on this species. Therefore the purpose of this poster is to highlight the importance of this species by assembling existing information on its biology and horticultural characteristics. It is hoped that this information will contribute to: (1) providing information on different aspects of the species in a readily available form, (2) detecting existing gaps in available knowledge, and (3) identifying constraints to its domestication and commercialization and indicating possible solutions.

Keywords: Arid and semi-arid, commercialization, domestication, *Grewia tenax*, underutilized fruit

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