

Morphology of Medicinal plant, *Mollugo cerviana* and its Growth Potential in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka

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Mollugo cerviana (Linn.) Ser. belonging to the family Molluginaceae has identification ambiguity though it is used in many traditional medicinal systems including Siddha and Ayurveda. Since the herb has huge medicinal properties and is highly valued in import market, it is necessary to cultivate the herb locally to fulfil the local demand. Hence, the present study was carried out for accurate morphological identification of the herb and to determine the suitability of cultivation in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka. Seed germination, growth performances, completion of the life cycle and morphological characteristics of *M. cerviana* were studied. The form, root system, shoot production, branching pattern, leaf arrangements, inflorescences and seed settings were determined. Herbarium specimens were prepared. Further, the growth rate was estimated by measuring the plant height daily and dry matter was estimated by measuring fresh and dry weight of the herb. Germination of *M. cerviana* was observed successfully in Vadamardchy area by sowing fresh seeds followed by heavy precipitation. Three flower buds/pods were present in a single inflorescence and a pod contained 17–50 seeds. Growth rate of the herb was 3 mm per day. Dry matter content was 1.38 g. The life cycle was completed in 50-60 days. Therefore, from these results it could be concluded that Northern Province can be considered as potential area to cultivate *M. cerviana* in commercial level. The germination ability of the seed should be studied to promote cultivation throughout the year to expand its cultivation.

Keywords: Growth potential, medicinal plants, *Mollugo cerviana*, morphology

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