

## INDIGOFERA SUFFRUTICOSA Miller.

## TAYUM

*Indigofera anal* Linn.

*Indigofera argentea* Blanco

Local names: *Pauai* (Iv.); *tagum* (S. L. Bis.); *tagun* (P. Bis.); *tayom* (Ilk); *tayon* (Ilk.); *tayum* (Ilk., P. Bis., Tag., C. Bis.); *yagum* (Bis.).

Tayum is found in waste places in and about towns, locally abundant and occasionally cultivated, from Batan Islands and northern Luzon to Mindanao. It is pantropic in distribution.

This is an erect, branched, half-woody plant, 1 meter or less in height. The stems are sparsely covered with short, appressed hairs. The leaves are 5 to 8 centimeters long. The leaflets are 9 to 11, oblong to oblong-elliptic, 1 to 2 centimeters in length, pale, and appressed hairy beneath. The flowers are red, about 5 millimeters long, and borne on axillary and solitary racemes 2 to 3 centimeters in length. The pods are numerous, crowded, reflexed, strongly curved, and 1 to 1.5 centimeters long, and contain from 6 to 8 seeds.

This species is one of the sources of natural indigo, and along with *Indigifolera tinctoria*, represents the chief indigo of commerce. Burkill states that it is cultivated as green manure in Malaya and Java. Dalziel reports that it is used as a perennial cover crop for coffee.

According to Holland, in French Guinea the bruised leaves are used as an anodyne in warm baths; in decoction they are a powerful sudorific. The roots and leaves are infused in rum for destroying vermin.

Standley reports that the Aztecs use the seeds for urinary diseases and for ulcers; the leaves, as a poultice applied to the head to reduce fever; and the whole plant, as a remedy for syphilis. Febrifuge, vulnerary, purgative, antispasmodic, diuretic, and stomachic properties have been attributed to the plant, and it is a favorite local remedy for epilepsy. In Brazil it is one of the reputed remedies for snake bites, and in the United States indigo is often applied to the stings of bees and other insects. The powdered seeds or a decoction of the root is said to be efficient in destroying vermin upon the human body.

Martinez states that in Mexico, the leaves as a cataplasm or in decoction are applied to the forehead of children with fever and to any painful area. The seeds in powder form are a cure for ulcers. Indigo is considered antispasmodic, and a cure for epilepsy.