

Wood sorrels (*Oxalis species*)

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Description

- Wood sorrel includes species in the genus *Oxalis*, such as the yellow oxalis and pink oxalis named after the colour of their flowers.
- This is a group of annual or perennial weeds that have distinctive 3 heart-shaped leaflets and an underground bulb or rhizome.
- The weed produces oxalic acid which gives them a sour taste.
- The stems are typically low-growing, creeping but that may be erect up to 50-60cm.
- The weed multiplies and spreads rapidly by means of bulbs, seeds or stolons.
- Seeds produced can be ejected up to 2 metres from the mother plant. The seeds is also spread by rodents through their digestive system.
- Stolons are capable of rooting at the nodes and regenerating into new plants.
- The bulbs may be formed up to 30cm below the ground surface and are enriched with food reserves. This enables the bulb survive over several seasons.



Fig 1 Heart shaped leaves and flower of yellow woodsorrel
Source: M.D., Thuraniira



Fig 3. Pink woodsorrel
Source: M.D., Thuraniira



Fig 2 . Bulbs forming on roots of pink woodsorrel
Source: M.D.,Thuraniira

Geographical distribution

- Wood sorrels are well adapted to grow on various habitats and are therefore found in all the rice growing regions of East Africa.

Crop losses and associated damage

- Wood sorrels have a strong competing ability and intensely compete for nutrients and space. This leads to poor rice growth and reduced yields.

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