SLENDER LEAF RATTLEBOX
Sunn Hemp

*Crotalaria ochroleuca*

**Fabaceae**

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**ECHO® PLANT INFORMATION SHEET**

**Description**

*Crotalaria ochroleuca* is an annual herbaceous plant utilized for fiber, forage, and as a green manure cover crop. Reaching heights of 2.5 m, *C. ochroleuca* bears long, slender, trifoliate leaves and five-petalous blooms (banner, wing, and keel) similar to other legumes.

**Uses**

*C. ochroleuca* is most often used for forage and as a green manure cover crop. Grown in rotation with commodity crops, *C. ochroleuca* builds soil nutrition between crops. As a forage crop, young, tender *C. ochroleuca* leaves and stems can supplement animal feeds up to 10% (particular care should be taken to limit ingestion of flowers and seeds as these contain much higher amounts of the antinutritive alkaloid also found in *C. juncea*).

**Common Names**

- French
  - sonnette
- Swahili
  - marajea

**Cultivation**

- **Elevation** – up to 2000 m
- **Rainfall** – found in floodplains, swamps, and along rivers, though when established also tolerates very dry conditions
- **Soil Types** – unclear
- **Temperature Range** – unclear; intolerant of frost
- **Day Length Sensitivity** – short-day sensitive
- **Light** – prefers full sun

*C. ochroleuca* seed should be planted 2-3 cm deep (preferred, if possible), or broadcast, at a rate up to 25 kg/ha, depending on use. Germination and establishment success can be dependent on moisture conditions and sun exposure (full sun preferred). *C. ochroleuca* does tolerate water-saturated soils much more than its cousin, *C. juncea*. Upon establishment, *C. ochroleuca* requires relatively little management.

**Harvesting and Seed Production**

If utilizing as forage, *C. ochroleuca* should be harvested 6-8 weeks after planting. For green manure cover crop use, it is recommended to cut *C. ochroleuca* 10-12 weeks after planting, before full bloom of the stand and before plants become too fibrous to incorporate.

**Pests and Diseases**

Can be affected by powery mildew and Fusarium wilt under humid conditions. *C. ochroleuca* has demonstrated ability to suppress some pestilent nematodes.

**Cooking and Nutrition**

Due to antinutritive properties, *C. ochroleuca* is not for human consumption.

**References**
