

## INTRODUCTION

Cleome rutidosperma is a weed of arable and wasteland in tropical Africa, Malaysia and the Caribbean region. Within recent years it has become increasingly important in Trinidad, where it is particularly prominent as an early coloniser of newly cultivated land during the rainy season.

Apart from a study of the plant in Singapore by JOHNSON & SENG (1959) and in Trinidad by NDUM (1959) and people doing weed successional studies, there are no references in literature to its biology in the field. This study attempts to bring together their observations and to test them. This was considered as being of particular value to future workers with herbicides, who need to know the biology and ecology of weeds and how to germinate the seeds consistently. This latter problem is dealt with in Part II.

The first part of this study follows the schedule recommended for the Biological Flora of the British Isles being produced by the Journal of Ecology (Anon (1958) ). Thus, with a few modifications, it might contribute to a similar Biological Flora of Trinidad.

Throughout this report the name C. rutidosperma DC. is used in preference to the more widely used name Cleome ciliata Schum. & Thonn. This is in accordance with the recommendations of ILTIS (1960), who, after studying the literature and herbaria specimens concluded that the former name was correct, and not that of Schumacher and Thonn given in 1829. His decisions concerning the names C. gynandra L. and C. viscosa L. have also been accepted.