

Stevia rebaudiana (Bertoni) Bertoni

Standardized Common Name: Stevia

Other Common Names: Candyleaf, Paraguayan Sweet Herb, Sweetleaf

Family: Asteraceae (Compositae)

Taxonomy: *Stevia* includes over 200 tropical American species. *Stevia rebaudiana* is endemic to Paraguay in the wild, although often cultivated elsewhere. So far as is known, no common related species shares the sweet taste for which the leaves are valued.

Description: Perennial subshrub; stems erect, 30–80(–140) cm high. Leaves opposite, sessile, lanceolate to spatulate-oblongate, (2–)3–5 cm long, 5–17(–25) mm broad; base cuneate; apex obtuse; margins serrate only above the middle. Inflorescence a loose panicle of heads (capitula), each with 5 disk florets. Involucre cylindrical; bracts (phyllaries) 5–8 mm long, narrowly lanceolate with acute apices. Receptacle flat, without bracts (paleae) beneath individual florets. Florets tubular, as long as involucre to twice as long; corolla tube white or pale purple; lobes 5, small, white, spreading. Fruit an achene (technically a cypsella), ca. 3 mm long, longitudinally ridged; pappus a single ring of 15–17 bristles.

Parts in Commerce: Leaves

Identification:

- Lanceolate to oblanceolate or oblong, (2–)3–5 cm long, 5–17(–25) mm broad
- Base cuneate, with long taper to narrow attachment at stem, sessile or with very short petiole
- Apex obtuse
- Margins entire toward base, serrate to crenate toward apex with shallow blunt teeth
- 3 main veins, with few netted secondary veins between them
- Texture varying from papery to almost leathery
- Olive to brownish green, often darker above
- Bearing short, inconspicuous hairs, especially near margins
- Taste strongly sweet

References:

Robinson BL. The Stevias of Paraguay. *Contrib Gray Herb Harvard Univ.* 1930;90:79–90.

Soejarto DD. Botany of *Stevia* and *Stevia rebaudiana*. In: Kinghorn AD, ed. *Stevia: the Genus Stevia*. London: Taylor & Francis; 2002:18–39. Medicinal and Aromatic Plants—Industrial Profiles. Vol. 19.

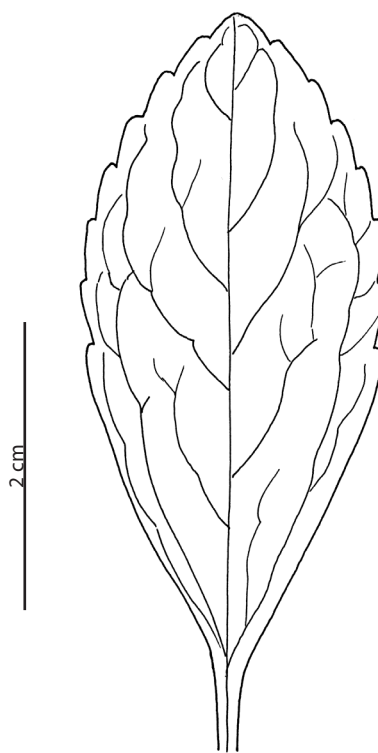


Figure 72: *Stevia rebaudiana* leaf.