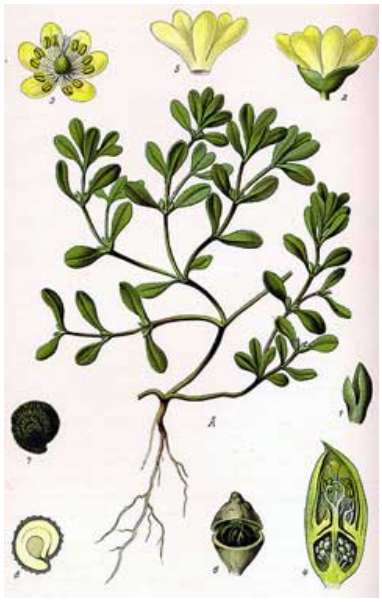
Portulaca oleracea - L.

Common Name	Green Purslane, Little hogweed
Family	Portulacaceae
Synonyms	
Known Hazards	None known
Habitats	Fields, waste ground, roadside verges, cultivated ground and by the sea[7].
Range	S. Europe. A not infrequent casual in Britain.
Edibility Rating	
Medicinal Rating	
Care	



http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Illustration_Portulaca_oleracea0.jpg

Summary

Physical Characteristics

Portulaca oleracea is a ANNUAL growing to 0.3 m (1ft) by 0.3 m (1ft in) at a fast rate.
It is frost tender. It is in flower from Jun to September, and the seeds ripen from Jul to September. The flowers are hermaphrodite (have both male and female organs) and are pollinated by Insects, self.The plant is self-fertile.

USDA hardiness zone : Coming soon

Suitable for: light (sandy) and medium (loamy) soils and prefers well-drained soil. Suitable pH: acid, neutral and basic (alkaline) soils. It cannot grow in the shade. It prefers moist soil.

Habitats

Cultivated Beds;

Edible Uses

Edible Parts: Leaves; Seed.
Edible Uses: Salt.

Leaves and stems - raw or cooked[1, 4, 12, 27, 37]. The young leaves are a very acceptable addition to salads, their mucilaginous quality also making them a good substitute for okra as a thickener in soups[4, 183]. Older leaves are used as a potherb[4]. The leaves have a somewhat sour flavour[85]. A spicy and somewhat salty taste[9]. The leaves are a source of omega-3 fatty acids, though seed sources such as walnuts are magnitudes richer[222]. The leaves can be dried for later use[85]. They contain about 1.8% protein, 0.5% fat, 6.5% carbohydrate, 2.2% ash[179]. Another analysis gives the following figures per 100g ZMB. 245 - 296 calories, 17.6 - 34.5g protein, 2.4 - 5.3g fat, 35.5 - 63.2g carbohydrate, 8.5 - 14.6g fibre, 15.9 - 24.7g ash, 898 - 2078mg calcium, 320 - 774mg phosphorus, 11.2 - 46.7mg iron, 55mg sodium, 505 - 3120mg potassium, 10560 - 20000ug B-carotene equivalent, 0.23 - 0.48mg thiamine, 1.12 - 1.6mg riboflavin, 5.58 - 6.72mg niacin and 168 - 333mg ascorbic acid[218]. Seed - raw or cooked[62, 102, 159]. The seed can be ground into a powder and mixed with cereals for use in gruels, bread, pancakes etc[183, 193]. The seed is rather small and fiddly to utilize[85]. In arid areas of Australia the plants grow quite large and can produce 10, 000 seeds per plant, a person can harvest several pounds of seed in a day. The seeding plants are uprooted and placed in a pile on sheets or something similar, in a few days the seeds are shed and can be collected from the sheet[193]. In Britain, however, yields are likely to be very low, especially in cool or wet summers[K]. The seed contains (per 100g ZMB) 21g protein, 18.9g fat 3.4g ash[218]. Fatty acids of the seeds are 10.9% palmitic, 3.7% stearic, 1.3% behenic, 28.7% oleic, 38.9% linoleic and 9.9% linolenic[218]. The ash of burnt plants is used as a salt substitute[183].

Composition

Figures in grams (g) or miligrams (mg) per 100g of food.

Leaves (Dry weight)

- 270 Calories per 100g
- Water : 0%
- Protein: 26g; Fat: 4g; Carbohydrate: 50g; Fibre: 11.5g; Ash: 20g;
- Minerals - Calcium: 1500mg; Phosphorus: 550mg; Iron: 29mg; Magnesium: 0mg; Sodium: 55mg; Potassium: 1800mg; Zinc: 0mg;
- Vitamins - A: 15000mg; Thiamine (B1): 0.35mg; Riboflavin (B2): 1.4mg; Niacin: 6mg; B6: 0mg; C: 250mg;
- Reference: [218]
- Notes: The figures given here are the median of a very wide range quoted in the report.

Medicinal Uses

Plants For A Future can not take any responsibility for any adverse effects from the use of plants. Always seek advice from a professional before using a plant medicinally.

Antiscorbutic; Depurative; Diuretic; Febrifuge; Skin; Tonic; Vermifuge.

The plant is antibacterial, antiscorbutic, depurative, diuretic and febrifuge[4, 7, 147, 152, 238]. The leaves are a rich source of omega-3 fatty acids, which is thought to be important in preventing heart attacks and strengthening the immune system[238]. Seed sources such as walnuts, however, are much richer sources[222]. The fresh juice is used in the treatment of strangury, coughs, sores etc[4, 7, 147, 152]. The leaves are poulticed and applied to burns[222], both they and the plant juice are particularly effective in the treatment of skin diseases and insect stings[7, 238]. A tea made from the leaves is used in the treatment of stomach aches and headaches[222]. The leaf juice is applied to earaches, it is also said to alleviate caterpillar stings[222]. The leaves can be harvested at any time before the plant flowers, they are used fresh or dried[238]. This remedy is not given to pregnant women or to patients with digestive problems[238]. The seeds are tonic and vermifuge[218, 240]. They are prescribed for dyspepsia and opacities of the cornea[218].

Other Uses

None known

Cultivation details

Requires a moist light rich well-drained soil in a sunny position[4, 37, 200]. Plants will not produce good quality leaves when growing in dry conditions[4]. A perennial plant in warmer climates than Britain, purslane is killed by frost but can be grown as a half-hardy annual in this country[1]. It can become an aggressive weed in areas where the climate suits it[274]. The flowers only open in full sunlight[244]. Purslane is occasionally cultivated for its edible leaves, there are some named varieties[183]. The plants take about six to eight weeks to produce a crop from seed and can then be harvested on a cut and come again principle, providing edible leaves for most of the summer[4].

Propagation

Seed - for an early crop, the seed is best sown under protection in early spring and can then be planted out in late spring[4]. Outdoor sowings in situ take place from late spring to late summer, successional sowings being made every two to three weeks if a constant supply of the leaves is required[4].

Plant Suppliers: Click here for a List

You can download this page as a PDF

Expert comment

Author

L.

Botanical References

100

Links / References

[K] **Ken Fern** Notes from observations, tasting etc at Plants For A Future and on field trips.

[1]**F. Chittendon.** RHS Dictionary of Plants plus Supplement. 1956
Comprehensive listing of species and how to grow them. Somewhat outdated, it has been replaces in 1992 by a new dictionary (see [200]).

[4]**Grieve.** A Modern Herbal.
Not so modern (1930's?) but lots of information, mainly temperate plants.

[7]**Chiej. R.** Encyclopaedia of Medicinal Plants.
Covers plants growing in Europe. Also gives other interesting information on the plants. Good photographs.

[9]**Launert. E.** Edible and Medicinal Plants.
Covers plants in Europe. a drawing of each plant, quite a bit of interesting information.

[12]**Loewenfeld. C. and Back. P.** Britain's Wild Larder.
A handy pocket guide.

[27]**Vilmorin. A.** The Vegetable Garden.
A reprint of a nineteenth century classic, giving details of vegetable varieties. Not really that informative though.

[37]**Thompson. B.** The Gardener's Assistant.
Excellent general but extensive guide to gardening practices in the 19th century. A very good section on fruits and vegetables with many little known species.

[62]**Elias. T. and Dykeman. P.** A Field Guide to N. American Edible Wild Plants.
Very readable.

[85]**Harrington. H. D.** Edible Native Plants of the Rocky Mountains.
A superb book. Very readable, it gives the results of the authors experiments with native edible plants.

[102]**Kavasch. B.** Native Harvests.
Another guide to the wild foods of America.

[147]**?** A Barefoot Doctors Manual.
A very readable herbal from China, combining some modern methods with traditional chinese methods.

[152]**Lassak. E. V. and McCarthy. T.** Australian Medicinal Plants.
A very good and readable guide to the subject.

[159]**McPherson. A. and S.** Wild Food Plants of Indiana.
A nice pocket guide to this region of America.

[179]**Reid. B. E.** Famine Foods of the Chiu-Huang Pen-ts'ao.
A translation of an ancient Chinese book on edible wild foods. Fascinating.

[183]**Facciola. S.** Cornucopia - A Source Book of Edible Plants.
Excellent. Contains a very wide range of conventional and unconventional food plants (including tropical) and where they can be obtained (mainly N. American nurseries but also research institutes and a lot of other nurseries from around the world.

[193]**Low. T.** Wild Food Plants of Australia.
Well presented, clear information and good photographs. An interesting read for the casual reader as well as the enthusiast

[200]**Huxley. A.** The New RHS Dictionary of Gardening. 1992.
Excellent and very comprehensive, though it contains a number of silly mistakes. Readable yet also very detailed.

[218]**Duke. J. A. and Ayensu. E. S.** Medicinal Plants of China
Details of over 1,200 medicinal plants of China and brief details of their uses. Often includes an analysis, or at least a list of constituents. Heavy going if you are not into the subject.

[222]**Foster. S. & Duke. J. A.** A Field Guide to Medicinal Plants. Eastern and Central N. America.
A concise book dealing with almost 500 species. A line drawing of each plant is included plus colour photographs of about 100 species. Very good as a field guide, it only gives brief details about the plants medicinal properties.

[238]**Bown. D.** Encyclopaedia of Herbs and their Uses.
A very well presented and informative book on herbs from around the globe. Plenty in it for both the casual reader and the serious student. Just one main quibble is the silly way of having two separate entries for each plant.

[240]**Chopra. R. N., Nayar. S. L. and Chopra. I. C.** Glossary of Indian Medicinal Plants (Including the Supplement).
Very terse details of medicinal uses of plants with a wide range of references and details of research into the plants chemistry. Not for the casual reader.

[244]**Phillips. R. & Foy. N.** Herbs
Deals with all types of herbs including medicinal, culinary, scented and dye plants. Excellent photographs with quite good information on each plant.

[274]**Diggs, Jnr. G.M.; Lipscomb. B. L. & O'Kennon. R. J** Illustrated Flora of North Central Texas
An excellent flora, which is also available on-line.

Readers comment

Elizabeth H.
David Beaulieu Tue Aug 22 2006

Some of us were picking purslane out of our lawns and gardens and putting it in salad long before it was a trendy item in upscale restaurants. Who knew?

Purslane Purslane overview: it's tasty, nutritious and free!

Elizabeth H.
mario caruana Wed Aug 20 2008

can this food be fed to canaries?

Elizabeth H.
Robert Gergulics Sat Apr 11 2009

Photos here: www.photorobg.com

www.photorobg.com

Elizabeth H.

Mrs Ukam, Ngozi Uchechi Fri May 29 2009

How are the fruits use for the tratment of the opaquecity of the cornea? How do one brew the tea for headache? What quantity of this can one consume without any adverse efects? Really it would have been necessary for one to know the anti-nutrient statues of portulaca oleracia as it would have ben of immernse importance to consummers. We are really overwhelmed for the good job you have so far done. We in Community Development Monitor a non-for-profit organisation based in Nigeria-West Africa will like to be collaborating with your organisation. Remain blessed.

QR Code

What's this?

This is a QR code (short for Quick Response) which gives fast-track access to our website pages. QR Codes are barcodes that can be read by mobile phone (smartphone) cameras. This QR Code is unique to this page. All plant pages have their own unique code. For more information about QR Codes click here.

1. Copy and print the QR code to a plant label, poster, book, website, magazines, newspaper etc and even t-shirts.
2. Smartphone users scan the QR Code which automatically takes them to the webpage the QR Code came from.
3. Smartphone users quickly have information on a plant directly for the pfaf.org website on their phone.

Rate This Plant

Please rate this plants for how successful you have found it to be. You will need to be logged in to do this. Our intention is not to create a list of 'popular' plants but rather to highlight plants that may be rare and unusual and that have been found to be useful by website users. This hopefully will encourage more people to use plants that they possibly would not have considered before.

Add a comment/link

If you have important information about this plant that may help other users please add a comment or link below. Only comments or links that are felt to be directly relevant to a plant will be included. If you think a comment/link or information contained on this page is inaccurate or misleading we would welcome your feedback at admin@pfaf.org. If you have questions about a plant please use the Forum on this website as we do not have the resources to answer questions ourselves.

* Please note: the comments by website users are not necessarily those held by PFAF and may give misleading or inaccurate information.

Subject : Portulaca oleracea

Links	To add a link to another website with useful info add the details here
Name of Site	
URL of Site	http://
Details	

Type the text

Privacy & Terms

reCAPTCHA™

Submit