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## Glycyrrhiza echinata - L.

<b>Common Name</b>	Wild Liquorice, Chinese licorice
<b>Family</b>	<b>Fabaceae or Leguminosae</b>
<b>Synonyms</b>	
<b>Known Hazards</b>	None known
<b>Habitats</b>	Muddy places by rivers[45].
<b>Range</b>	S. Europe.
<b>Edibility Rating</b>	
<b>Medicinal Rating</b>	
<b>Care</b>	

### Summary

### Physical Characteristics



Glycyrrhiza echinata is a PERENNIAL growing to 1 m (3ft 3in). It is hardy to zone (UK) 8. It is in flower from Jun to July. The flowers are hermaphrodite (have both male and female organs) and are pollinated by Insects. It can fix Nitrogen.

USDA hardiness zone : 7-10

Suitable for: light (sandy) and medium (loamy) soils. Suitable pH: acid, neutral and basic (alkaline) soils. It can grow in semi-shade (light woodland) or no shade. It prefers moist soil.

### Habitats

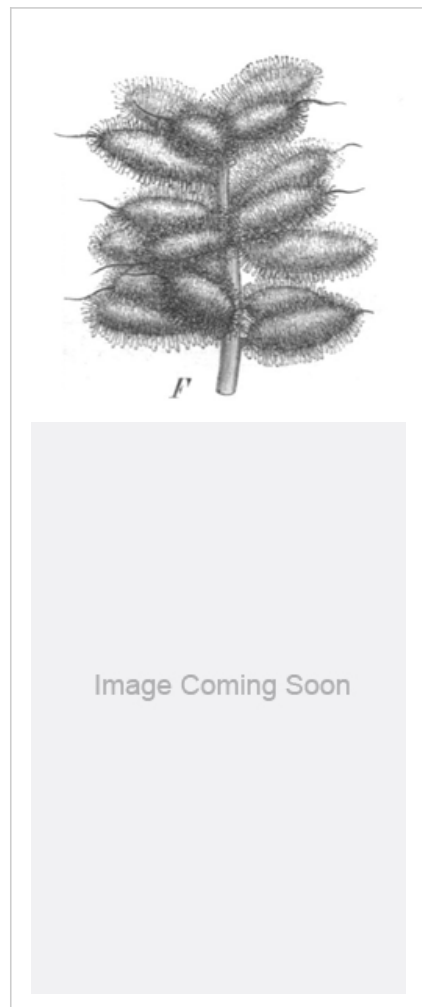
Cultivated Beds;

### Edible Uses

Edible Parts: [Root](#).

Edible Uses: [Sweetener](#); [Tea](#).

Root - raw or cooked. Very fibrous, it is often boiled to extract the sugars and is a source of Russian and German liquorice[183]. It is used as a confection, a sweetener and medicinally[2, 105, 177]. A delicious sweet flavour[K]. The dried root is often used for chewing, it is especially useful for teething children and as a tooth cleaner[K]. The root contains glycyrrhizin, a substance that is 50 times sweeter than sugar. A tea made from the roots is an excellent thirst quencher.



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## 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.

[Alterative](#); [Expectorant](#); [Tonic](#).

The root is alterative, expectorant and tonic. It is usually mixed with other herbs, partly at least to improve their taste[178].

## Other Uses

None known

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## Cultivation details

Requires a deep well cultivated fertile moisture-retentive soil for good root production[200]. Prefers a sandy soil with abundant moisture[238]. A slightly alkaline soil produces the best plants[238]. This species is not hardy in the colder areas of the country, it tolerates temperatures down to between -5 and -10°C[200]. Cultivated for its medicinal root in S. Europe[50]. Unless seed is required, the plant is usually prevented from flowering so that it puts more energy into producing good quality roots[238]. A very deep-rooted plant, it can be difficult to eradicate once it is established[238]. This species has a symbiotic relationship with certain soil bacteria, these bacteria form nodules on the roots and fix atmospheric nitrogen. Some of this nitrogen is utilized by the growing plant but some can also be used by other plants growing nearby[200].

## Propagation

Pre-soak the seed for 24 hours in warm water and then sow spring or autumn in a greenhouse[200]. Prick out the seedlings into individual pots when they are large enough to handle, and grow them on for their first winter in a greenhouse. Plant out in late spring or early summer when in active growth. Plants are rather slow to grow from seed[238]. Division of the root in spring or autumn. Each division must have at least one growth bud. Autumn divisions can either be replanted immediately or stored in clamps until the spring and then be planted out[200]. It is best to put up the smaller divisions and grow them on in a cold frame until they are established before planting them out in the spring or summer.

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## Expert comment

### Author

L.

## Botanical References

50200

## Links / References

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

[2] **Hedrick, U. P.** *Sturtevant's Edible Plants of the World*.

Lots of entries, quite a lot of information in most entries and references.

[45] **Polunin, O.** *Flowers of Greece and the Balkans*.

A good pocket flora, it also lists quite a few plant uses.

[50]? *Flora Europaea*

An immense work in 6 volumes (including the index). The standard reference flora for Europe, it is very terse though and with very little extra information. Not for the casual reader.

[105] **Tanaka, T.** *Tanaka's Cyclopaedia of Edible Plants of the World*.

The most comprehensive guide to edible plants I've come across. Only the briefest entry for each species, though, and some of the entries are more than a little dubious. Not for the casual reader.

[177] **Kunkel, G.** *Plants for Human Consumption*.

An excellent book for the dedicated. A comprehensive listing of Latin names with a brief list of edible parts.

[178] **Stuart, Rev. G. A.** *Chinese Materia Medica*.

A translation of an ancient Chinese herbal. 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).

[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.

[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.

## Readers comment

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