

Corchorus

<i>Corchorus</i>	
Scientific classification	
Kingdom:	Plantae
(unranked):	Angiosperms
(unranked):	Eudicots
(unranked):	Rosids
Order:	Malvales
Family:	Malvaceae
Subfamily:	Grewioideae
Genus:	<i>Corchorus</i> L.
Species	
About 40–100 species, including: <i>Corchorus aestuans</i> <i>Corchorus capsularis</i> <i>Corchorus carnarvonensis</i> <i>Corchorus cunninghamii</i> <i>Corchorus erodioides</i> <i>Corchorus junodi</i> <i>Corchorus olitorius</i> <i>Corchorus sidoides</i> <i>Corchorus tridens</i> <i>Corchorus walcottii</i>	

Corchorus is a genus of about 40–100 species of flowering plants in the family Malvaceae, native to tropical and subtropical regions throughout the world.

Different common names are used in different contexts, with **jute** applying to the fiber produced from the plant, and **mallow-leaves** for the leaves used as a vegetable.

Description

The plants are tall, usually annual herbs, reaching a height of 2–4 m, unbranched or with only a few side branches. The leaves are alternate, simple, lanceolate, 5–15 cm long, with an acuminate tip and a finely serrated or lobed margin. The flowers are small (2–3 cm diameter) and yellow, with five petals; the fruit is a many-seeded capsule. It thrives almost anywhere, and can be grown year-round.

Taxonomy

The genus *Corchorus* is classified under the subfamily Grewioideae of the family Malvaceae. It contains around 40 to 100 species.

The genus *Oceanopapaver*, previously of uncertain placement, has recently been synonymized under *Corchorus*. The name was established by Guillaumin in 1932 for the single species *Oceanopapaver neocaledonicum* Guillaumin from New Caledonia. The genus has been classified in a number of different families including Capparaceae, Cistaceae, Papaveraceae, and Tiliaceae. The putative family name "Oceanopapaveraceae" has occasionally appeared in print and on the web but is a nomen nudum and has never been validly published nor recognised by any system of plant taxonomy.^[1]

The genus *Corchorus* was first described by Linnaeus in his great work *Species Plantarum* (1753). It is derived from the Ancient Greek word κόρχορος or κόρκορος (*korkhoros* or *korkoros*) which referred to a wild plant of uncertain identity, possibly jute or wild asparagus.

Uses

Fiber

The fibers from *Corchorus* (known as jute) are the most widely cultivated vegetable fiber after cotton.

Food



In Thai cuisine, the leaves are known as *bai po*

Corchorus leaves are consumed in the cuisines of various countries. *Corchorus olitorius* is used mainly in the cuisines of southern Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa, *Corchorus capsularis* in Japan and China. It has a mucilaginous (somewhat "slimy") texture, similar to okra, when cooked. The seeds are used as a flavouring, and a herbal tea is made from the dried leaves. The leaves of *Corchorus* are rich in betacarotene, iron, calcium, and vitamin C. The plant has an antioxidant activity with a significant α -tocopherol equivalent vitamin E.^[citation needed]

In North Africa and the Middle East, the young leaves of *Corchorus* species are known in Arabic as *malukhiyah* and are used as green leafy vegetables. *Malukhiyah* is eaten widely in Egypt and some consider it the Egyptian national dish. It is featured in cuisines from Lebanon, Palestine, Syria, Jordan and Tunisia. In Turkey and Cyprus, the plant is known as *molohiya* or *molocha* and is usually cooked into a kind of chicken stew. The leaves of *Corchorus* have been a staple Egyptian food since the time of the Pharaohs and it is from there that it gains its recognition and popularity. Varieties of mallow-leaves stew with rice is a well known Middle Eastern cuisine.

In Nigerian cuisine, especially amongst the Yorubas, it is commonly used in a stew known as *ewedu*, a condiment to other starch-based foods such as *amala*. The Hausa people of Nigeria and their Fula neighbours call it *rama*. They use it to produce soup (*taushe*) or boil the leaves and mix it with *kuli-kuli* (groundnut cake) to form a dish known as *kwado* in Hausa. The Hausa peasant farmers cultivate it beside their corn-stalk constructed homesteads or among their main crops in their farms. The Hausa and Fulbe peoples also use jute leaves to treat some diseases.



Corchorus aestuans in Hyderabad, India.

In Sierra Leone it is known as *krain krain* (or *crain crain*) and is cooked as stew. The stew is usually eaten with rice or *fofoo* (a traditional food made from cassava).

Jute leaves are also consumed among the Luhya people of Western Kenya, where it is commonly known as *mrenda* or *murere*. It is eaten with starchy foods like *ugali*, a staple for most communities in Kenya. In Northern Sudan it is called *khudra*, meaning "green" in Sudanese Arabic. The Songhai people of Mali call it *fakohoy*.

In India, it is locally known as *nalta sag*. It is a favorite food during the summer months, especially in Sambalpur and the western part of Odisha. Usually it is lightly sauteed and eaten along with rice or rice gruel.

In the Philippines, *C. olitorius* is known as *saluyot*. It is commonly consumed as a leafy vegetable together with bamboo shoots.

In Thai cuisine, the leaves of the *Corchorus olitorius* (locally known as *bai po*; Thai: ใบปลอ) are eaten blanched, together with plain rice congee. The taste resembles that of spinach and samphire.

References

- [1] B. A. Whitlock, K. G. Karol, and W. S. Alverson. 2003. here Chloroplast DNA Sequences Confirm the Placement of the Enigmatic *Oceanopapaver* within *Corchorus* (Grewioideae: Malvaceae s.l., Formerly Tiliaceae) (<http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/resolve?id=doi:10.1086/344760>). *International Journal of Plant Sciences* 164: 35–41

External links

- Malvaceae.info: *Corchorus* webpage (<http://www.malvaceae.info/Genera/Corchorus/Corchorus.html>)

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