PLANT FACT SHEET

Euphorbia hirta L.

GENUS *Euphorbia* **FAMILY** Euphorbiaceae

COMMON NAMES Asthma plant

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Fruit, Flowers, Vegetable, Tea

Caution: All Euphorbias or spurges have irritating sap and many have chemicals that can cause cancer.
The tender leaves and shoots are cooked as a vegetable. They should only be eaten in small quantities. They are also used to make a drink.
The fruit are eaten raw.
The flowers are eaten raw as a sweet.
The young leaves can be stored for 3-4 days after harvesting.

DESCRIPTION

A herb. It can grow as an annual or keep growing from year to year. It grows to 15-60 cm high and spreads to 15 cm wide. The stems lie over and are dull reddish green and hairy. The leaves occur opposite one another and are 5 cm long. The are broadly oblong and with fine teeth long the edge. The flowers are small and occur in the axils of leaves. They are separately male and female and gathered into groups. The fruit are hairy and 3-celled. They are about 1.2 mm across. They are an irregular shaped with ridges across them.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It will grow on most soils. It prefers an open sunny position. It is damaged by drought and frost. In Papua New Guinea it grows from near sea level to about 2,000 m altitude. In Argentina it grows below 800 m above sea level. In Northeastern India it grows between 1,200-1,600 m above sea level. It grows in wetlands. It can grow in arid places. In Sichuan and Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seed or cuttings.

NOTES

Plants have been used to treat bronchitis and asthma. The tips have also been eaten to treat diarrhoea. Plants often are self sown in cultivated land. There are about 2000 Euphorbia species. Most Euphorbias have sap which irritates the skin. It is high in proVitamin A.

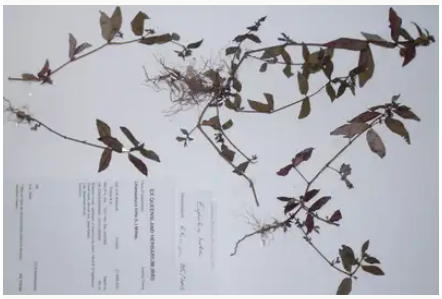
PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

REFERENCES

Ajain, M., Ali, T., & Siddiqui, M.F., 2015, A Survey of Ethnobotanically Important Herbaceous Plants of Tehsil Jatoi,District Muzaffar Garh, Punjab, Pakistan. Int. J. Biol. Res., 3(2): 87-92, 2015.

Ambasta, S.P. (Ed.), 2000, The Useful Plants of India. CSIR India. p 213

Angami, A., et al, 2006, Status and potential of wild edible plants of Arunachal Pradesh. Indian Journal of Traditional Knowledge 5(4) October 2006, pp 541-550

Baro, D., Baruah, S. and Borthukar, S. K. 2015, Documentation on wild vegetables of Baksa district, BTAD (Assam). Scholars Research Library. Archives of Applied Science Research, 2015, 7 (9):19-27

Bodkin, F., 1991, Encyclopedia Botanica. Cornstalk publishing, p 463

Borrell, O.W., 1989, An Annotated Checklist of the Flora of Kairiru Island, New Guinea. Marcellin College, Victoria Australia. p 75

Brown, D., 2002, The Royal Horticultural Society encyclopedia of Herbs and their uses. DK Books. p 210

Burkill, H. M., 1985, The useful plants of west tropical Africa, Vol. 2. Kew.

Burkill, I.H., 1966, A Dictionary of the Economic Products of the Malay Peninsula. Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Vol 1 (A-H) p 994

Cowie, I, 2006, A Survey of Flora and vegetation of the proposed Jaco-Tutuala-Lore National Park. Timor-Lests (East Timor) www.territorystories.nt/gov.au p 47

Cribb, A.B. & J.W., 1976, Wild Food in Australia, Fontana. p 178

Dangol, D. R. et al, 2017, Wild Edible Plants in Nepal. Proceedings of 2nd National Workshop on CUAOGR, 2017.

Dansi, A., et al, 2008, Traditional leafy vegetables and their use in the Benin Republic. Genet Resour Crop Evol (2008) 55:1239–1256

Dobriyal, M. J. R. & Dobriyal, R., 2014, Non Wood Forest Produce an Option for Ethnic Food and Nutritional Security in India. Int. J. of Usuf. Mngt. 15(1):17-37

Dutta, U., 2012, Wild Vegetables collected by the local communities from the Churang reserve of BTD, Assam. International Journal of Science and Advanced Technology. Vol. 2(4) p 121

Flora of Pakistan. www.eFloras.org

Fowler, D. G., 2007, Zambian Plants: Their Vernacular Names and Uses. Kew. p 26

Gautam, R. S., et al, 2022, Ethnobotanical Review of Wild Edible Plants of Nepal. Journal of Natural History Museum Volume 32, 2021-22 p 113

Grubben, G. J. H. and Denton, O. A. (eds), 2004, Plant Resources of Tropical Africa 2. Vegetables. PROTA, Wageningen, Netherlands. p 561

Henty, E.E., & Pritchard, G.S., 1973, Weeds of New Guinea and their control. Botany Bulletin No 7, Division of Botany, Lae, PNG. p 103

Henty, E.E., 1980, Harmful Plants in Papua New Guinea. Botany Bulletin No 12. Division Botany, Lae, Papua New Guinea. p 52, 54

Hossain, U. & Rahman, A., 2018, Study and quantitative analysis of wild vegetable floral diversity available in Barisal district, Bangladesh. Asian J. Med. Biol. Res. 2018, 4 (4), 362-371

Hussey, B.M.J., Keighery, G.J., Cousens, R.D., Dodd, J., Lloyd, S.G., 1997, Western Weeds. A guide to the weeds of Western Australia. Plant Protection Society of Western Australia. p 144

Hu, Shiu-ying, 2005, Food Plants of China. The Chinese University Press. p 510

Jackes, B. R., 2010, Plants of Magnetic Island. 3rd Edition. James Cook University, Australia. p 60

Jha, S. K., 2023, Wild Edible Plants of Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Annals of Plant Sciences Volume 12, Issue 09 (2023) pp. 5926-5938

Joshi, N., et al, 2007, Traditional neglected vegetables of Nepal: Their sustainable utilization for meeting human needs. Tropentag 2007. Conference on International Agricultural Research for Development.

Joshi, N. & Siwakoti, M., 2012, Wild Vegetables Used by Local Community of Makawanpur District and Their Contribution to Food Security and Income Generation. Nepal Journal of Science and Technology Vol. 13, No. 1 (2012) 59-66

Kar, A., et al, 2013, Wild Edible Plant Resources used by the Mizos of Mizoram, India. Kathmandu University Journal of Science, Engineering and Technology. Vol. 9, No. 1, July, 2013, 106-126

Karthi, Sathya, & Salome, 2014, Uncultivated Edible Greens from Small Millet Farms Tamil Nadu India. IDRC

Kumar, R. & Saikia, P., 2020, Wild edible plants of Jharkhand and their utilitarian perspectives. Indian Journal of Traditional Knowledge Vol 19 (2), April 2020, pp 237-250

Kumari, B. & Solanki, H., 2019, The Traditional Knowledge of Wild Edible Leaf used by Tribal People in Chhattisgarh. International Journal of Plant and Environment (2019), Vol. 5(4) :284-292

Latham, P., 2004, Useful Plants of Bas-Congo province. Salvation Army & DFID p 128

Lazarides, M. & Hince, B., 1993, Handbook of Economic Plants of Australia, CSIRO. p 111

Li, D. et al, 2017, Ethnobotanical survey of herbal tea plants from the traditional markets in Chaoshan, China. Journal of Ethnopharmacology. 205 (2017) 195-206

Low, T., 1991, Wild Herbs of Australia and New Zealand. Angus & Robertson. p 89

Manandhar, N.P., 2002, Plants and People of Nepal. Timber Press. Portland, Oregon. p 228

Full reference list (39 more) at https://www.echocommunity.org/en/resources/0bf24d91-5619-431d-980c-00ced26487ac

PROVIDED BY **Food Plants International**

French, B.R. & Maynard, A.R. Food Plants International Database. Food Plants International

LICENCE CC BY-NC-SA 3.0

ONLINE FACT SHEET https://www.echocommunity.org/en/resources/0bf24d91-5619-431d-980c-00ced26487ac