PLANT FACT SHEET

Use with caution

This plant can be harmful if it is eaten raw, in large amounts or without the right preparation. Read the whole fact sheet before use.

Echium vulgare L.

GENUS *Echium* **FAMILY** Boraginaceae

COMMON NAMES Viper's Bugloss

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Flowers - nectar, Flowers - tea

The blue flowers are crystallised and added to salads. They are also sucked for their nectar.
It also yields an attractive honey. It should only be eaten in small amounts due to alkaloids.
The leaves are cooked and eaten like spinach. The leaves should be finely chopped. They are used in soups.
The leaves have been added to cool drinks.

DESCRIPTION

A herb which grows over two years. It reaches to 45-60 cm tall and spreads to 45-60 cm wide. It is rough and hairy. It can have one or several stems. The flowers are 10-19 mm long. Four of the five stamens are longer than the remaining one. The flowers are violet. They are on branching spikes. The flowers are 18 mm across. The fruit are 4 nutlets.

HABITAT

It is a temperate plant. It grows in dry open habitats. It grows best in light to medium, well-drained soils. It suits calcareous soils. It needs an open, sunny position. In Argentina it grows from sea level to 2,000 m above sea level. It suits hardiness zones 7-10. Tasmania Herbarium.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seed.

NOTES

There are about 40 Echium species all indigenous to the Mediterranean.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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