
Jewels of Opar

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Rarely is an easy-to-grow and attractive ornamental also a tasty, edible leafy green, suitable for salads, sandwiches, soups, and stews. Jewels of Opar (*Talinum paniculatum*), also called fameflower, grows similarly to purslane. As such, it can reseed itself and grows easily, with little need for attention and without pest problems. Its light green leaves and small pink flowers brighten gardens and also make a good addition to container gardens.

Leaves are eaten raw
([https://uses.plantnet-](https://uses.plantnet-project.org/en/Talinum_paniculatum_(PROTA))

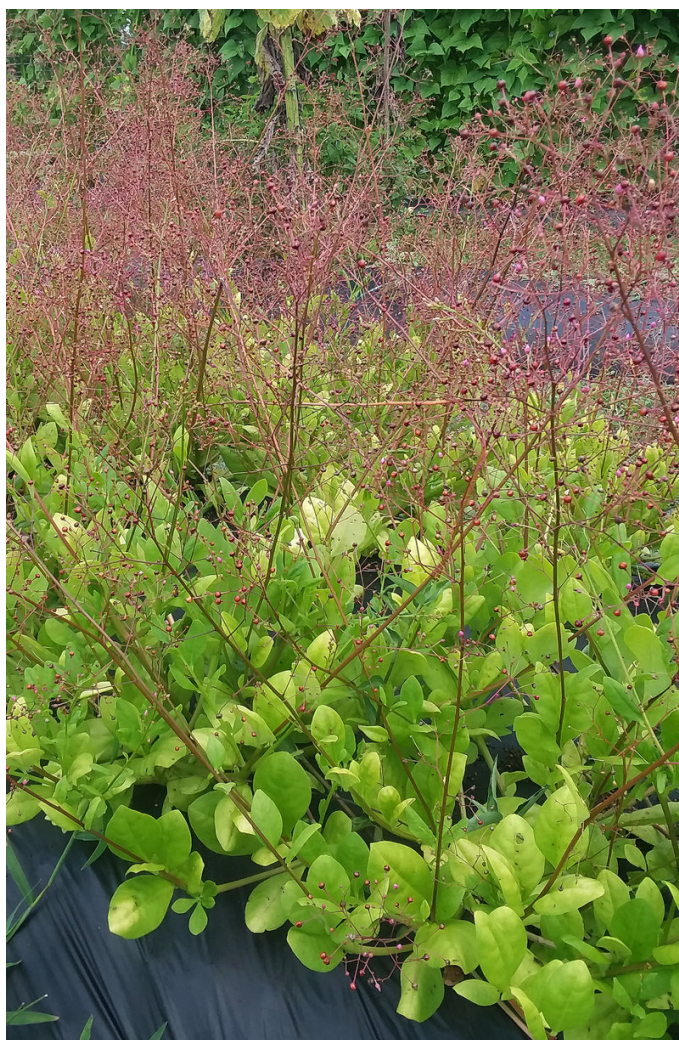


Figure 13. Jewels of opar plants in-field. Source: Holly Sobetski

[project.org/en/Talinum_paniculatum_\(PROTA\)](https://uses.plantnet-project.org/en/Talinum_paniculatum_(PROTA))) or cooked ([https://uses.plantnet-project.org/en/Talinum_paniculatum_\(PROTA\)](https://uses.plantnet-project.org/en/Talinum_paniculatum_(PROTA))). They have a mild taste and are only slightly mucilaginous. The leaves remain tasty throughout the flowering and seed-producing phase; they do not turn bitter like many herbaceous salad greens do when the plant flowers. Nutritional composition is thought to be similar to that of a

related plant called waterleaf (*Talinum triangulare*). Thus, Jewels of Opar is likely to be a good source of nutrients (Okon and James 2014 on *T. triangulare*). Consume uncooked leaves in modest amounts to minimize consumption of oxalic acid, an anti-nutrient that can cause kidney stones..

Jewels of Opar grows as a perennial in the tropics, and as an annual in the subtropics and warmer temperate regions. It flowers abundantly and seeds can be collected when they turn black and become dry. It reseeds readily from seeds that fall to the ground. Be aware of the potential for unwanted seedlings in deciding where to plant it. The plant does best in full sun but can tolerate partial shade. Frequent watering is necessary during early growth, but full-grown plants are drought tolerant. Jewels of Opar can withstand poor sandy soils and does well in containers. Development workers may request trial packets of seed from the ECHO Global Seed Bank (<https://echocommunity.site-ym.com/store/default.aspx>). Enjoy!

Further reading:

Fern, K. 2018. Tropical Plants Database
(<http://tropical.theferns.info/viewtropical.php?id=Talinum+paniculatum>).

Arseniuk, Adam. 2016. "Talinum triangulare - Philippine Spinach, Waterleaf, Leaf Ginseng, Cariru." Herbs From Distant Lands
(<http://herbsfromdistantlands.blogspot.com/2016/03/talinum-triangulare-philippine-spinach.html>).

Mosango, M. 2004. Talinum paniculatum (Jacq.) Gaertn
([https://www.prota4u.org/database/protav8.asp?g=pe&p=Talinum+paniculatum+\(Jacq.\)+Gaertn](https://www.prota4u.org/database/protav8.asp?g=pe&p=Talinum+paniculatum+(Jacq.)+Gaertn)). [Internet] Record from PROTA4U. Grubben, G.J.H. & Denton, O.A. (Editors). PROTA (Plant Resources of Tropical Africa / Ressources végétales de l'Afrique tropicale), Wageningen, Netherlands

Okon, O.G. and U.S. James. 2014 Proximate and Mineral Composition of Some Traditional Vegetables in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria
(<http://www.ijsrp.org/research-paper-0814/ijsrp-p3276.pdf>). *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, 4(8), August 2014

Irena, 2015. "A Heat-Tolerant Leafy Green Vegetable Disguised as a Flower." Southern Exposure Seed Exchange
(<http://www.southernexposure.com/blog/2015/03/a-heat-tolerant-leafy-green-vegetable-disguised-as-a-flower/>).