PLANT FACT SHEET

Glycyrrhiza glabra L.

GENUS *Glycyrrhiza* **FAMILY** Fabaceae

COMMON NAMES Liquorice, Licorice

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Roots, Herb, Spice, Leaves - tea

The extract from the roots is used to flavour foods which are eaten. The sweet root is chewed. It is the source of licorice.
The root is used to flavour drinks.
The leaves are used for tea.

DESCRIPTION

A hardy deciduous perennial herb or bush. It grows to 1-2 m tall. It has a clump of straight woody stalks. It has a deep taproot. It also has spreading stolons just under the ground surface. It has spreading leaves with leaflets along the stalk. The plant loses its leaves during the winter. The flowers are in a cluster and are blue and pea like. The pods are flat and 2-3 cm long. They turn brown at maturity. The pods contain between 1 and 7 kidney shaped seeds. They are brown and very small.

HABITAT

It does well in warm temperate and subtropical climates. It grows well in areas suitable for citrus. It needs a deep light soil. It needs a sunny position. It can tolerate drought. It can grow in arid places. It suits hardiness zones 7-9.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It is grown from seed or cuttings from the stolons. The seed has a hard seed coat and needs to be treated before sowing. Seeds only germinate slowly. Growing from cuttings is more easy. Root cuttings 20-40 cm long are used. These can be planted vertically in the soil. Plants are often grown with 30 cm between plants and 60 cm between rows.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Plants make slow growth during the first two years. Plants are ready for harvesting in the third or fourth year. The plant is harvested and the roots washed then cut into 30-60 cm long lengths. Roots can be sold or used fresh or dried. The roots are finely cut or crushed to produce a pulp. The material is then boiled and evaporated to produce an extract.

NOTES

There are about 18 Glycyrrhiza species. It has anticancer properties. It is also useful for its anti-diabetic benefits.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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