PLANT FACT SHEET

Stachys affinis Miq.

GENUS *Stachys* **FAMILY** Lamiaceae

COMMON NAMES Chinese Artichoke, Japanese artichoke, Japanese potato

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Tubers, Root, Leaves, Stem tubers, Vegetable

The rhizomes are eaten. The tubers are salted or preserved in plum vinegar.
The leaves are eaten raw or boiled or salted.
The tubers are usually boiled for a few minutes then eaten. They are also fried, roasted, steamed or pickled. They are pickled with ume plums and salt and Perilla leaves. Tubers are eaten raw or boiled. They are washed and eaten raw in salads. They can be roasted or stir fried. They can be pickled.
The tubers discolor when exposed to air and lose flavour when peeled.

DESCRIPTION

A herb. It keeps growing from year to year. The underground stems or rhizomes are white. The stems above ground are 30-120 cm long. The leaf stalks are 1-3 cm long and the leaf blades are oval and 3-12 cm long by 1.5-6 cm wide. The base is wedge shaped. The flowers are red to purple. The nutlets are black-brown and oval. They are 1.5 cm across.

HABITAT

It is a cool temperate plant. It can grow in cold places. They need a temperate climate, full sun and a well drained soil. In China it grows on wet hillsides and areas covered with water up to 3200 m altitude in northern regions. It needs a pH between 6-6.5 for best growth. It suits plant hardiness zones 4-8. Hobart Botanical Gardens. In Sichuan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It can be grown from seed or tubers. Tubers can be planted 5 cm deep and 30 cm apart. The tubers are harvested after the plant dies back.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Tubers are harvested after the tops die back with the first frost.

NOTES

There are about 300 Stachys species. Chemical composition: leaves and tubers contain stachydrin; tubers contain stachyose and manneotetrose.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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