PLANT FACT SHEET

Helianthus giganteus L.

GENUS *Helianthus* **FAMILY** Asteraceae

COMMON NAMES Giant sunflower

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds, Roots

The tuberous roots are edible.
The seeds are ground to flour and mixed with maize flour to make bread.
The seeds can be boiled in water to obtain oil or can be ground to make flour. The flour can be used for a type of bread or used to thicken vegetable soups.

DESCRIPTION

A tall herb. It keeps growing from year to year. It grows 4.5 m high and spreads 0.9 m wide. The roots are fleshy and shaped like spindles. The leaves are opposite and simple. They do not have a leaf stalk. They are narrow and rough on both sides. The leaves are 20 cm long. They have shallow teeth and are finely hairy. The leaves are oval and pointed or sword shaped. The flower is a yellow disk. The flower heads are 8 cm wide. The disk is yellow-brown and the ray florets are yellow. The flower heads occur on long stalks. The fruit is a smooth dry achene.

HABITAT

It is a temperate plant. It grows in moist salty lowlands. It suits hardiness zones 4-9.

NOTES

Almost all Helianthus (60 species) in N and S America are edible.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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ONLINE FACT SHEET https://www.echocommunity.org/en/resources/403a0347-567a-485e-a4f0-57bed86efd9f