



PLANT FACT SHEET

Allium ampeloprasum L.; (L.) Gay

GENUS *Allium* FAMILY Amaryllidaceae

COMMON NAMES Leek

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Flowers, Leaves, Root, Herb, Vegetable, Bulb, Sprouts, Spice

The whole plant is boiled except for the tops of the leaves. They can also be eaten raw. Sprouted seeds are eaten.

DESCRIPTION

An onion like plant without a bulb and with flat leaves. It grows one year, then flowers the next. There is one bulb. There can be bulblets. The covering is white. The leaves are flattened and vary from 40-100 cm long by 1.2-2.5 cm wide. Many flowers are produced in a large flower head where small flowers are on equal length stalks forming a ball.

HABITAT

A temperate plant. It does best with a day temperature below 24°C. So it is mostly over 800 m altitude in the tropics and grows up to 2600 m. It needs a fertile soil. It is very frost resistant. The soil needs to be well drained but retain moisture. It suits hardiness zones 5-10.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

They can be grown from seed. Seedlings can be transplanted. They are transplanted when 15-20 cm high. The base of plants or suckers are more commonly used for planting. It is difficult to save seed in the wet tropics. If plants are planted in a hole 10-15 cm deep they develop long white edible stalks. The soil should be mounded up around the base of the plant. A spacing of 15-20 cm between plants and in rows 30-36 cm apart is suitable,

Harvesting and Seed Production

Plants are ready for harvest after 16-20 weeks. A yield of 20 kg per 10 metres square is average.

NOTES

There are about 300-700 *Allium* species. Most species of *Allium* are edible (Flora of China). All alliums are edible but they may not all be worth eating!

They have also been put in the family Alliaceae.

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