PLANT FACT SHEET

# *Viola odorata* L.

**GENUS** *Viola* **FAMILY** Violaceae

**COMMON NAMES** Sweet violets, English Violet

## EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

**Edible parts:** Flowers, Leaves, Herb, Spice, Leaves - tea

The flowers, roots or leaves can be used to make tea.
The leaves can be cooked and eaten. Young leaves should be chosen. They are added to soups.
The leaves and flowers can be added to salads. The nectar of the flowers is sucked.
The flowers can be candied or used for garnish or made into syrup, jellies and marmalade.
The leaf extract is employed to flavour ice cream, candy and baked goods.

## DESCRIPTION

A herb. It keeps growing from year to year. It grows 10-15 cm high and spreads 30-60 cm wide. It has rooted runners. The leaves are heart shaped. They cluster around the base of the plant. The flowers are violet blue. They have a sweet smell. The fruit are round, hairy capsules.

## HABITAT

It is a temperate plant. It does best in well-composted, moist soils. It needs a protected and partly shaded position. It is resistant to frost but sensitive to drought. In Argentina it grows from sea level to 2,000 m above sea level. It suits hardiness zones 7-10.

## PRODUCTION

### Cultivation

Plants can be grown by seed or by division. Sections of the runners can be used.

## NOTES

There are about 500 Viola species. It has anticancer properties.
Viola odorata contains flavonoids, phenols, alkaloids, glycosides, saponins, stigmasterols, methyl salicylate, mucilage and vitamin C, etc.

## PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

## REFERENCES


Aldhmoun, M., et al, 2025, Old Plants for New Food Products? The Diachronic Human Ecology of Wild Herbs in the Western Alps. Plants 2025, 14, 122.

Ambasta, S.P. (Ed.), 2000, The Useful Plants of India. CSIR India. p 679

Bhatia, H., et al, 2018, Traditionally used wild edible plants of district Udhampur, J&K, India. Journal of Ethnobiology and Ethnomedicine (2018) 14:73

Bhatia, H., et al, 2021, Wild Edible Fruits and Vegetables of Himachal Pradesh. Journal of Research: The Bede Athenaeum Indian Journals.com March 2021, Vol. 12 No. 1 (53-66)

Blamey, M and Grey-Wilson, C., 2005, Wild flowers of the Mediterranean. A & C Black London. p 136

Bodkin, F., 1991, Encyclopedia Botanica. Cornstalk publishing, p 1019

Bonet, M. A. & Valles, J., 2002, Use of non-crop food vascular plants in Montseny biosphere reserve (Catalonia, Iberian Peninsula). International Journal of Food Sciences and Nutrition (2002) 53, 225–248

Bremness, L., 1994, Herbs. Collins Eyewitness Handbooks. Harper Collins. p 226

Brickell, C. (Ed.), 1999, The Royal Horticultural Society A-Z Encyclopedia of Garden Plants. Convent Garden Books. p 1054

Burnie, G & Fenton-Smith, J., 1999, A Grower's Guide to Herbs. Murdoch Books. p 72

Cundall, P., (ed.), 2004, Gardening Australia: flora: the gardener's bible. ABC Books. p 1474

Esperanca, M. J., 1988. Surviving in the wild. A glance at the wild plants and their uses. Vol. 2. p 299

Facciola, S., 1998, Cornucopia 2: a Source Book of Edible Plants. Kampong Publications, p 245

Flora of Australia, Volume 8, Lecythidales to Batales, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra (1982) p 94

Girard, N. J., 2020, Sustainable Foraging of Wild Edible Plants in Norway. A Biocultural Approach. M. Sc. thesis Norwegian University. p 136

Hedrick, U.P., 1919, (Ed.), Sturtevant's edible plants of the world. p 680

Hibbert, M., 2002, The Aussie Plant Finder 2002, Florilegium. p 307

http://nordicfood lab/org/blog/2102/9/wild-edible-plants-an-overview

http://www.botanic-gardens-ljubljana.com/en/plants

Hussey, B.M.J., Keighery, G.J., Cousens, R.D., Dodd, J., Lloyd, S.G., 1997, Western Weeds. A guide to the weeds of Western Australia. Plant Protection Society of Western Australia. p 230

Huxley, A. (Ed.), 1977, The Encyclopedia of the Plant Kingdom. Chartweil Books. p Front.

Jackes, D. A., 2007, Edible Forest Gardens

Kalle, R. & Soukand, R., 2012, Historical ethnobotanical review of wild edible plants of Estonia (1770s-1960s) Acta Societatis Botanicorum Poloniae 81(4):271-281

Källman, S., 1980, FAO Report D 54012-H2, Sweden. "A literature study that is important for the knowledge and ideas about the selection and nutritional values of wild Swedish plants that can be used as food in emergency situations"

Kermath, B. M., et al, 2014, Food Plants in the Americas: A survey of the domesticated, cultivated and wild plants used for Human food in North, Central and South America and the Caribbean. On line draft. p 914

Khan, M. & Hussain, S., 2014, Diversity of wild edible plants and flowering phenology of district Poonch (J & K) in the northwest Himalaya. Indian Journal of Sci, Res. 9(1): 032-038

Kintzios, S. E., 2006, Terrestrial Plant-Derived Anticancer Agents and Plant Species Used in Anticancer research. Critical Reviews in Plant Sciences. 25: pp 79-113

Kiple, K.F. & Ornelas, K.C., (eds), 2000, The Cambridge World History of Food. CUP p 434

Lazarides, M. & Hince, B., 1993, Handbook of Economic Plants of Australia, CSIRO. p 247

Levy-Yamamori, R., & Taaffe, G., 2004, Garden Plants of Japan. Timber Press. p 355

Luczaj, L. et al, 2017, Comfrey and Buttercup Eaters: Wild Vegetables of the Imereti Region in Western Georgia, Caucasus. Economic Botany, 71(2), 2017, pp. 188–193

Mabey, R., 1973, Food for Free. A Guide to the edible wild plants of Britain, Collins. p 156

Malezas Comestibles del Cono Sur, INTA, 2009, Buernos Aires

Mattalia, G., et al, 2012, Traditional uses of wild food and medicinal plants among Brigasc, Kye´, and Provenc¸al communities on the Western Italian Alps. Genet Resour Crop Evol. Springer

Mir, M. Y., 2014, Documentation and ethnobotanical survey of wild edible plants used by the tribals of Kupwara, J & K, India. International Journal of Herbal Medicine. 2(4): 11-18

Motti, R., et al, 2022, Edible Flowers Used in Some Countries of the Mediterranean Basin: An Ethnobotanical Overview. Plants. 2022, 11, 3272

Paczkowska, G . & Chapman, A.R., 2000, The Western Australian Flora. A Descriptive Calatogue. Western Australian Herbarium. p 568

Pham-Hoang Ho, 1999, An Illustrated Flora of Vietnam. Nha Xuat Ban Tre. p 547

Pieroni, A., 1999, Gathered wild food plants in the Upper Valley of the Serchio River (Garfagnana), Central Italy. Economic Botany 53(3) pp 327-341

Pieroni, A.,& Giusti, M. E., 2009, Alpine Ethnobotany in Italy: Journal of Ethnobiology and Ethnomedicine. 5:32

Full reference list (16 more) at https://www.echocommunity.org/en/resources/4cd302e1-fde5-4983-86cb-8f64afbb0812

**PROVIDED BY** **Food Plants International**

French, B.R. & Maynard, A.R. Food Plants International Database. Food Plants International

**LICENCE** CC BY-NC-SA 3.0

**ONLINE FACT SHEET** https://www.echocommunity.org/en/resources/4cd302e1-fde5-4983-86cb-8f64afbb0812