PLANT FACT SHEET

Portulaca quadrifida L.

GENUS *Portulaca* **FAMILY** Portulacaceae

COMMON NAMES Small-leaved purslane

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Vegetable

The leaves are boiled and used in preparing bread from millet.
The whole plant is also boiled and used as a vegetable. It is also used for chutney.
CAUTION: It is claimed this plant should not be eaten in large amounts. It probably accumulates nitrates and probably contains oxalates. Changing the cooking water could reduce these.

DESCRIPTION

An annual creeping herb. It is weak and fleshy. The stems curl backwards. They form roots at the nodes. The leaves occur opposite each other. They are flat and oval and 4-8 mm long by 2-5 mm wide. The flowers occur singly at the tips of the branches. There are 4-5 white leaves around them. The flowers are yellow. The fruit capsule is yellow and has a lid. The capsule is 2.5 mm across and round. The seeds are very small.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows on sand and in wayside drains and grassland. It grows in dry waste places. It grows between 50-1,750 m above sea level. It can grow in arid places. It is highly salt tolerant.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seeds. Fresh seeds need light to germinate. It can be grown from segments.

NOTES

2n = 18. There are about 200 Portulaca species. They are mostly in the tropics and subtropics.

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