PLANT FACT SHEET

Centaurea calcitrapa Linn.

GENUS *Centaurea* **FAMILY** Asteraceae

COMMON NAMES Common star thistle, Caltrops, Star thistle

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Shoots

The young stems and leaves are eaten raw. They are also boiled and seasoned with olive oil and lemon. They are also used in stews.
Some records say they were boiled and fermented for a long time.

DESCRIPTION

An annual plant although it sometimes takes 2 years to complete its life cycle. It forms a bush and is slightly woolly. It grows about 1 m high. The leaves at the base form a ring and are deeply divided into narrow lobes. The stem is pale coloured. It is branched, and hairy when young. It becomes smooth with age. The stem leaves are much divided and they get smaller towards the top of the plant. The flowers are pinkish-purple. They are surrounded by bracts with yellow spines at the ends. These spines can be 2.5 cm long. The plant can send out runners in sandy soil.

HABITAT

It is a Mediterranean climate plant. It grows in waste places. It will grow in most soils and conditions. It is resistant to drought and frost. It grows in temperate places. Tasmania Herbarium.

PRODUCTION

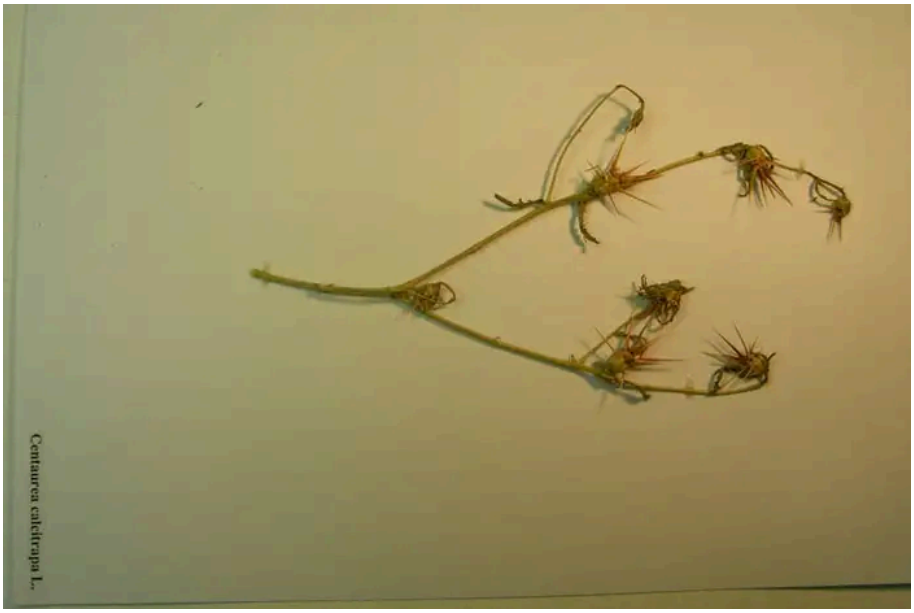
Cultivation

It can be grown by seed.

NOTES

There are about 450 Centaurea species.

PICTURES



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