PLANT FACT SHEET

Stellaria media (L.) Villars

GENUS *Stellaria* **FAMILY** Caryophyllaceae

COMMON NAMES Common Chickweed

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Seeds, Vegetable, Flowers, Stems

The tender shoots and leaves are cooked as a vegetable. They are chopped, boiled and then fried. They are used in soup. They can also be used in salads. They are also squeezed into juice.
The small seeds are used for bread or to thicken soups.
Flowering tops are used as a vegetable or garnish.
CAUTION: In large amounts it can cause paralysis. This is due to toxic nitrates.

DESCRIPTION

An annual herb. It lies along the ground. It has lax slender stems. There is a single line of white hairs which run up the stems until they reach a joint. The stems are round in cross section. The leaves occur opposite. The lower leaves have stalks. The upper leaves do not have stalks. Leaves are oval and taper to a short point. The leaves are 1-3 cm long and 5-10 mm wide. Leaves are pale underneath. The flowers are purple in a flat topped arrangement with central flowers opening first. The fruit is an oval capsule. The seeds are red-brown.

HABITAT

It grows in temperate places. In Nepal it grows between 1800-2700 m altitude. It grows in rich, moist soils and woody areas. It grows in wetlands. It is cold tolerant. In Argentina it grows from sea level to 3,000 m above sea level. It suits hardiness zone 4. Tasmania Herbarium. In Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. It can be grown from root transplant.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Young seedlings can be cut with scissors then left to regrow.

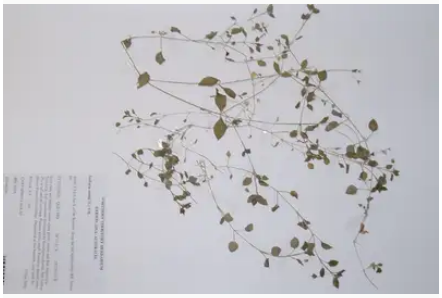
NOTES

There are about 130 Stellaria species. They are mostly in temperate regions. It is high in Vitamin E.
Because it contains saponins it should not be eaten in large quantities.

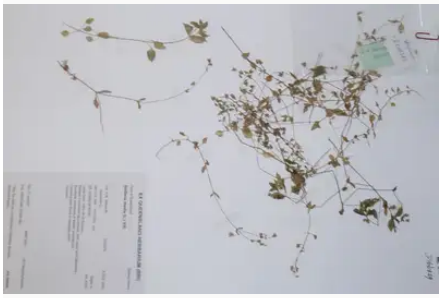
PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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