



PLANT FACT SHEET

Centella asiatica (L.) Urban

GENUS *Centella* FAMILY Apiaceae

COMMON NAMES Asian pennywort, Indian Pennywort

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Vegetable, Leaves - tea, Flowers

The whole plant is eaten raw or cooked. The leaves are added to tossed salads or steamed and served with rice. They can be cooked in vegetable soups or stews. The fresh leaves can be stored for 3 days. They should only be eaten in small quantities. They are used to improve chutney.

The plant is also used for medicine.

The leaves are made into tea. The juice of the leaves diluted with water and sweetened with sugar are used as a drink.

DESCRIPTION

A slender perennial plant with creeping stems which root at the nodes. It grows to 10 cm high and spreads to 50 cm across. The stems are creeping and form roots at the nodes. Groups of leaves develop in clumps at the nodes. Leaves are round or heart shaped with a wavy edge. The edge has teeth or indentations along it. The leaves can be 8 cm across, when grown in shady places. The leaves have 7-9 forked veins. The leaf stalks are 6-15 cm long. The stems and flowers are dull red or pink. The flowers are small and occur in small clusters. The fruit is round but flattened. It is very small and 2 mm across.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It is a ground cover plant in old gardens, in light rainforest. It suits humid locations. It grows in wetlands. It often grows along streams and rice paddies. It grows best in sunny, moist, fertile places. It grows in wetlands. In Papua New Guinea it grows mostly up to about 500 m altitude but will probably grow up to 2500 m. It is drought and frost tender. In Nepal it grows to about 2800 m altitude. It needs a temperature above 10°C. It can grow in arid places. It suits hardiness zones 9-12. In Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

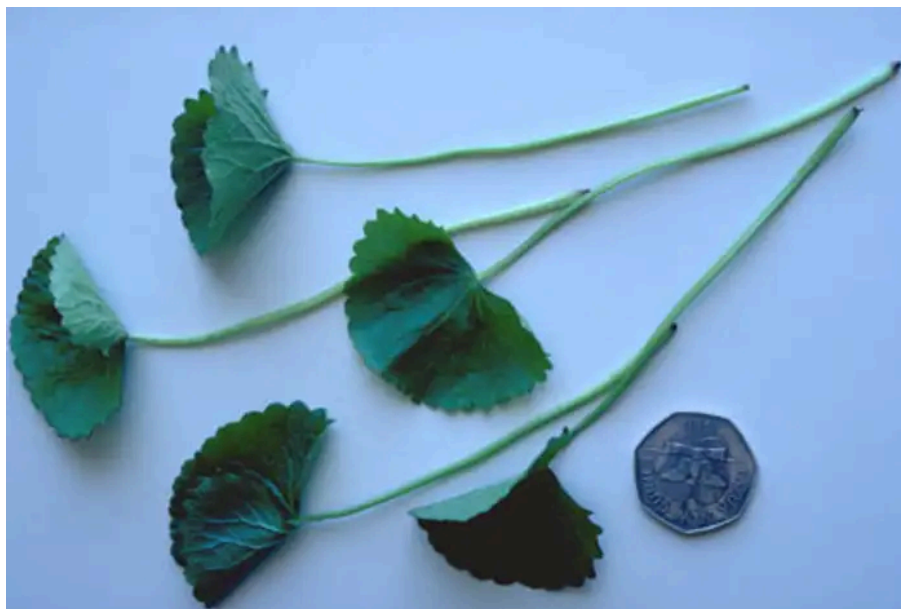
New plants can be produced by seeds or by runners. Mostly plants grow and spread naturally. Cuttings or runners are the easiest way to grow the plants.

NOTES

There are about 20-40-50 Centella species. They are tropical. It is considered to have many medicinal and health benefits. It is a functional food. It increases milk supply in nursing women.

It has 5.6 mg per 100 g dry weight and 3.0 mg fresh weight of alpha-tocopherol (Vitamin E).

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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