PLANT FACT SHEET

**Use with caution**

This plant can be harmful if it is eaten raw, in large amounts or without the right preparation. Read the whole fact sheet before use.

# *Tussilago farfara* L.

**GENUS** *Tussilago* **FAMILY** Asteraceae

**COMMON NAMES** Coltsfoot, Coughwort

## EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

**Edible parts:** Flowers, Leaves, Root, Stems, Leaves - tea

Young leaves are boiled and washed to remove tannin then eaten with oil and salt. The older leaves are eaten as a vegetable. They are also used in soup. The leaves are used for sarma in Turkey. They are rolled around a filling of rice or minced meat.
The dried leaves can be soaked to make a fragrant tea, or burned and the residue used as a salt like seasoning. The ash from the plant is used as a salt substitute.
The flowers and stalk are also eaten raw. The flowers are used for wine. The dried flowers are used for tea.
The rootstock is candied in syrup.
The slender rootstock is candied in sugar.
CAUTION: It contains pyrrolizidine alkaloids that cause cancer but these are destroyed with heating.

## DESCRIPTION

A small plant that keeps growing from year to year. It grows 30 cm high and spreads 20 cm wide. The stem is erect, and downy. It is white with purple scales. The leaves appear after flowering. The leaves are wide "like a horse's hoof". They are heart shaped and 20 cm across. They are serrated around the edge and downy underneath. The flowers are yellow. They are large and at the top of the plant and occur singly. These open only in sunny weather.

## HABITAT

A temperate plant. It does best in wet, loamy, limestone based soils. It needs a protected, partly shaded position. It often grows naturally on moist river banks. It suits hardiness zones 3-9. In Sichuan and Yunnan.

## PRODUCTION

### Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seed or by division.

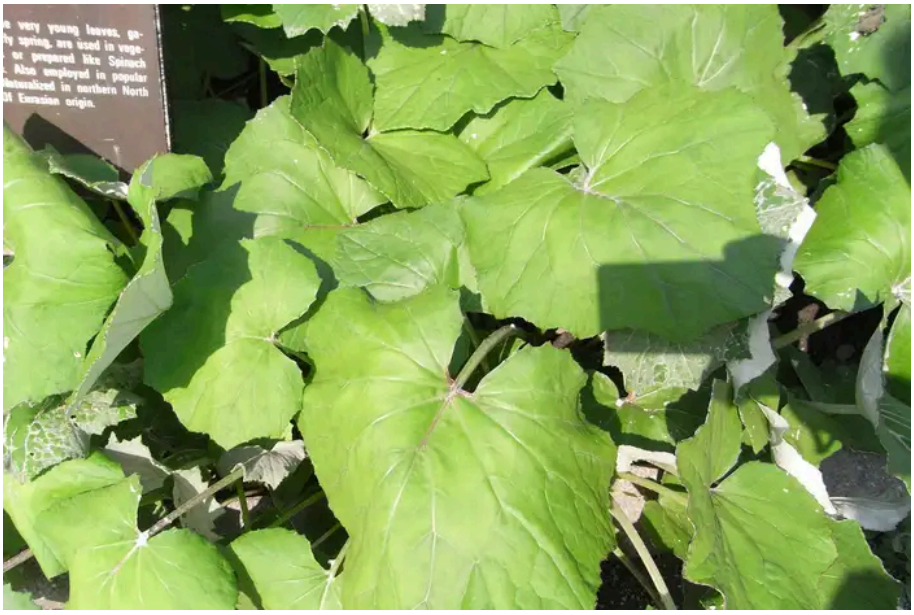
### Harvesting and Seed Production

The plant can spread widely and easily and become invasive.

## NOTES

There are about 15 Tussilago species. The young leaves are boiled, then washed to remove tannin. The ash is rich in zinc.
Contains biologically active substances, polysaccharides (fructose, galactose, arabinose, glucose, xylose and uronic, acids, mucus (up to 7% - 10%), saponins, carotenoids, ascorbic acid, gallic acid, flavonoids, tannins, organic acids (malic, tartar).

## PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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