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.

Asclepias tuberosa L.

GENUS *Asclepias* **FAMILY** Apocynaceae

COMMON NAMES Butterfly milkweed, Pleurisy root

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Flowers, Leaves, Root, Tuber, pod, Vegetable

CAUTION: It contains a glucoside asclepiadin. It is poisonous.
Tender shoots, roots and young seed pods are cooked as vegetables.
Flowers are used as a sweetener. The flower nectar crystallizes and can be eaten.

DESCRIPTION

A small shrub. It grows 60-90 cm high. It spreads 30 cm wide. It has a large tuberous root. It is a milkweed which does not have milky juice. It has a woody base and keeps growing from year to year. The stems are erect and hairy. The leaves are narrow and sword shaped. They are 10-14 cm long. They are on crowded stems. The flowers are orange coloured. They occur in heads. The fruit are pointed weed heads 15 cm long.

HABITAT

It is a temperate plant. It grows in sandy areas but is best in rich peaty soils. It needs an open sunny position. It is resistant to frost but damaged by drought. It suits hardiness zones 3-9.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seed or cuttings.

NOTES

There are 100 Asclepias species.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

REFERENCES

Beckstrom-Sternberg, Stephen M., and James A. Duke. "The Foodplant Database." http://probe.nalusda.gov:8300/cgi-bin/browse/foodplantdb. (ACEDB version 4.0 - data version July 1994)

Bircher, A. G. & Bircher, W. H., 2000, Encyclopedia of Fruit Trees and Edible Flowering Plants in Egypt and the Subtropics. AUC Press. p 44

Bodkin, F., 1991, Encyclopedia Botanica. Cornstalk publishing, p 107

Bremness, L., 1994, Herbs. Collins Eyewitness Handbooks. Harper Collins. p 152

Brickell, C. (Ed.), 1999, The Royal Horticultural Society A-Z Encyclopedia of Garden Plants. Convent Garden Books. p 144

Brown, D., 2002, The Royal Horticultural Society encyclopedia of Herbs and their uses. DK Books. p 134

Cundall, P., (ed.), 2004, Gardening Australia: flora: the gardener's bible. ABC Books. p 194

Esperanca, M. J., 1988. Surviving in the wild. A glance at the wild plants and their uses. Vol. 1. p 157

Facciola, S., 1998, Cornucopia 2: a Source Book of Edible Plants. Kampong Publications, p 32

Hedrick, U.P., 1919, (Ed.), Sturtevant's edible plants of the world. p 79

Hibbert, M., 2002, The Aussie Plant Finder 2002, Florilegium. p 34

Kermath, B. M., et al, 2018, Food Plants in the Americas: A survey of the domesticated, cultivated and wild plants used for Human food in North, Central and South America and the Caribbean. p 124

Kiple, K.F. & Ornelas, K.C., (eds), 2000, The Cambridge World History of Food. CUP p 1740

Lim, T. K., 2015, Edible Medicinal and Non Medicinal Plants. Volume 9, Modified Stems, Roots, Bulbs. Springer p 13

Loughmiller, C & L., 1985, Texas Wildflowers. A Field Guide. University of Texas, Austin. p 16

Plants for a Future database, The Field, Penpol, Lostwithiel, Cornwall, PL22 0NG, UK. http://www.scs.leeds.ac.uk/pfaf/

Sp. pl. 1:217. 1753

Wilson, S., 1997, Some Plants are Poisonous. Reed. p 28

World Checklist of Useful Plant Species 2020. Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

PROVIDED BY **Food Plants International**

French, B.R. & Maynard, A.R. Food Plants International Database. Food Plants International

LICENCE CC BY-NC-SA 3.0

ONLINE FACT SHEET https://www.echocommunity.org/en/resources/7a77f14e-be18-4dd8-9edc-45255a300d03