PLANT FACT SHEET

Smyrnium olusatrum L.

GENUS *Smyrnium* **FAMILY** Apiaceae

COMMON NAMES Black lovage, Alexanders

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Stems, Leaves, Spice, Root, bud

The seeds can be used for flavouring or pepper substitute.
They have a celery flavour and are also used in soups and stews.
The young shoots and leaf stalks are blanched and used in salads.
The roots are boiled and served with oil or used in soups. They are also eaten raw by shepherds and children.

DESCRIPTION

A herb. It grows over 2 years or keeps growing from year to year. The plant grows 0.9-1.5 m tall. It spreads 45-90 cm wide. It has bright glossy leaves and a furrowed stem. The leaves are roundish and in groups of three. The leaves are divided 1 or 2 times and there are teeth along the edge. The upper leaves are smaller than the lower leaves. The flowers are yellow-green. The fruit are 7-8 mm long. The large black seed follow.

HABITAT

It is a temperate plant. It grows in damp places near roadsides and on the edges of woodland. It is often near the sea and on dunes and coastal cliffs. It suits hardiness zones 6-10.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Leaves need to be blanched to remove the bitterness.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

REFERENCES

Baydoun, S., et al, 2023, Wild leafy Vegetables: A potential source for a traditional Mediterranean food from Lebanon. Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems. 6:991979

Benitez, G., et al, 2023, Wild Edible Plants of Andalusia: Traditional Uses and Potential of Eating Wild in a Highly Diverse Region. Plants 2023, 12, 1218 p 11

Biscotti, N. & Pieroni, A., 2015, The hidden Mediterranean diet: wild vegetables traditionally gathered and consumed in the Gargano area, Apulia, SE Italy. Acta Societatis Botanicorum Poloniae 84 (3): 327-338

Biscotti, N. et al, 2018, The traditional food use of wild vegetables in Apulia (Italy) in the light of Italian ethnobotanical literature. Italian Botanist 5:1-24

Blamey, M and Grey-Wilson, C., 2005, Wild flowers of the Mediterranean. A & C Black London. p 155

Bodkin, F., 1991, Encyclopedia Botanica. Cornstalk publishing, p 933

Borelli, T., et al, 2022, Assessment of the Nutritional Value of Selected Wild Food Plants in Türkiye and Their Promotion for Improved Nutrition. Sustainability 2022,14,11015.

Bremness, L., 1994, Herbs. Collins Eyewitness Handbooks. Harper Collins. p 270

Ciftcioglu, C. G., 2015, Sustainable wild-collection of medicinal and edible plants in Lefke region of North Cyprus. Agroforest Syst. Springer

Cundall, P., (ed.), 2004, Gardening Australia: flora: the gardener's bible. ABC Books. p 1345

Dogan, A., et al, 2014, A review of edible plants on the Turkish Apiaceae species. J. Fac. Pharm. Istanbul, 44(2) pp 251-262

Dogan, Y., 2012, Traditionally used wild edible greens in the Aegean Region of Turkey. Acta Societatis Botanicorum Poloniae 81(4): 329-342

Dogan, Y. et al, 2013, Wild Edible Plants sold in the Local Markets of Izmir, Turkey. Pak. J. Bot. 45(S1): 177-184

Dolina, K. & Luczaj, L., 2014, Wild food plants used on the Dubrovnik coast (south-eastern Croatia) Acta Soc Bot Pol 83(3):175–181

Ertug, F., 2004, Wild Edible Plants of the Bodrum Area. (Mugla, Turkey). Turk. J. Bot. 28 (2004): 161-174

Ertug, F, Yenen Bitkiler. Resimli Türkiye Florası -I- Flora of Turkey - Ethnobotany supplement

Esperanca, M. J., 1988. Surviving in the wild. A glance at the wild plants and their uses. Vol. 1. p 26

Facciola, S., 1998, Cornucopia 2: a Source Book of Edible Plants. Kampong Publications, p 22

Geraci, A., et al, 2018, The wild taxa utilized as vegetables in Sicily (Italy): a traditional component of the Mediterranean diet. Journal of Ethnobiology and Ethnomedicine (2018) 14:14

Guzelsoy, N. A., et al, 2017, Nutritional Properties of some Wild Edible Plant Species in Turkey. ANADOLU, J. of AARI 27(2) 2017, 39-45

Hammer, K. & Spahillari, M., 1999, Crops of European origin. in Report of a networking group on minor crops. IPGRI p 46

Hedrick, U.P., 1919, (Ed.), Sturtevant's edible plants of the world. p 611

Hermandez Bermejo, J.E., and Leon, J. (Eds.), 1994, Neglected Crops. 1492 from a different perspective. FAO Plant Production and Protection Series No 26. FAO, Rome. p 263, 319

Hemphill, I, 2002, Spice Notes Macmillan. p 29, 235

Hibbert, M., 2002, The Aussie Plant Finder 2002, Florilegium. p 291

http://cypruswildflowers.com

Jardin, C., 1970, List of Foods Used In Africa, FAO Nutrition Information Document Series No 2.p 101

Kiple, K.F. & Ornelas, K.C., (eds), 2000, The Cambridge World History of Food. CUP p 432, 1716

Lentini, F. and Venza, F., 2007, Wild food plants of popular use in Sicily. J Ethnobiol Ethnomedicine. 3: 15

Lim, T. K., 2015, Edible Medicinal and Non Medicinal Plants. Volume 9, Modified Stems, Roots, Bulbs. Springer p 77

Luczaj et al, 2013, Wild vegetable mixes sold in the markets of Dalmatia (southern Croatia). Journal of Ethnobiology and Ethnomedicine. 8:2

Luczaj, L. et al, 2014, Wild Food Plants of Dalmatia (Croatia). in A. Pieroni, C. L. Quave (eds.), Ethnobotany and Biocultural Diversities in the Balkans, p 143

Mabey, R., 1973, Food for Free. A Guide to the edible wild plants of Britain, Collins. p 110

Mahklouf, M. H., 2019, Ethnobotanical Study of Edible Wild Plants in Libya. European Journal of Ecology. 5(2): 30-40

Martin, F.W. & Ruberte, R.M., 1979, Edible Leaves of the Tropics. Antillian College Press, Mayaguez, Puerto Rico. p 222

Michael, P., 2007, Edible Wild Plants and Herbs. Grub Street. London. p 13

Mukemre, M., et al, 2016, Survey of wild food plants for human consumption in villages of Catak, (Van-Turkey), Indian Journal of Traditional Knowledge. Vol. 15(2) pp. 183-191

Nassif, F., & Tanji, A., 2013, Gathered food plants in Morocco: The long forgotten species in Ethnobotanical Research. Life Science Leaflets 3:17-54

Pasta, S., et al, 2020, An Updated Checklist of the Sicilian Native Edible Plants: Preserving the Traditional Ecological Knowledge of Century-Old Agro-Pastoral Landscapes. Frontiers in Plant Science. Volume 11|Article 388

Pieroni, A., et al, 2024, Isolated Mediterranean foraging: wild greens in the matrifocal community of Olympos, Karpathos Island, Greece. Journal of Ethnobiology and Ethnomedicine (2024) 20:98

Full reference list (5 more) at https://www.echocommunity.org/en/resources/8b507682-7aab-4a23-9180-3f41026df133

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/8b507682-7aab-4a23-9180-3f41026df133