PLANT FACT SHEET

Asarum canadense Linn.

GENUS *Asarum* **FAMILY** Aristolochiaceae

COMMON NAMES Wild ginger, American wild ginger, Canada Snakeroot, Heart snakeroot, Vermont snakeroot

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Roots, Flowers, Spice, Leaves - tea

The young rootstocks are cut into pieces and boiled for an hour then simmered for 20-30 minutes in a rich sugar solution. These make a sweet.
The dried and rushed rootstocks can be used as a substitute for ginger.
The flowers can also be used as flavouring.
Caution: It can contain Aristolochic acid that damages the liver and kidneys and also asarone which causes cancer. It should not be taken by pregnant women.

DESCRIPTION

A small evergreen herb. It can grow 1 m tall. It lies along the ground and has a ginger smell. It has a slender underground stem or rhizome. The leaves are dark green, hairy and heart shaped. They are 5-20 cm across. The flowers are urn shaped and purple brown. They are on short stalks near the ground.

HABITAT

It is a temperate plant. It grows in rich woods, near rocks. It is resistant to frost but damaged by drought. It suits hardiness zone 2-8.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seed or by division.

NOTES

There are about 70-100 Asarum species. They are mainly temperate in the Northern hemisphere.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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