



PLANT FACT SHEET

Medicago sativa L.

GENUS *Medicago* FAMILY Fabaceae

COMMON NAMES Alfalfa, Lucerne

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds, Sprouts, Leaves, Vegetable, Flowers

Seeds are often sprouted and the young sprouts eaten raw.

Young leaves are eaten cooked. They are often lightly cooked and added to meat dishes and soups.

The seeds can be ground into flour for bread.

The dried and powdered leaves and flowers can be used as tea.

DESCRIPTION

A herb. It is an erect or spreading legume. It grows to 80 cm high and spreads to 30-80 cm wide. It forms deep roots. It keeps growing from year to year. The stems are slender and hairy. The leaves are bluish green. The leaves have 3 leaflets like clover. The leaflets are oval or narrow. They are 3 cm long. The flowers are mauve. They appear in long stalked bunches. The fruit are small sickle shaped pods. The pods are deep brown. There are any named cultivated varieties.

HABITAT

It will grow in warm and temperate climates. In West Africa it grows along the northern border of the Sahara. It can grow in arid places. It suits hardiness zones 4-8. Tasmania Herbarium.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed sown where they are to grow. Plants can be 10 cm apart. Plants can be cut back to encourage new growth for the young leaves.

Harvesting and Seed Production

The first picking of young leaves can be made 3-4 weeks after sowing.

NOTES

There are about 55 *Medicago* species.

It has cholesterol lowering properties.

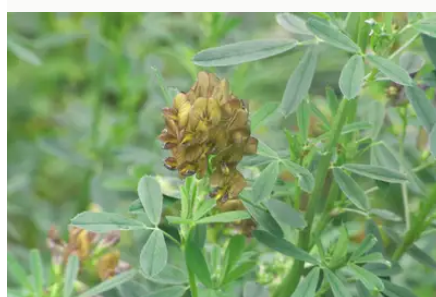
PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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