PLANT FACT SHEET

Oenothera biennis L.

GENUS *Oenothera* **FAMILY** Onagraceae

COMMON NAMES Evening primrose

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Roots, Leaves, Seeds - oil, Herb, Flowers, Vegetable

The leaves can be used raw in salads. They are also used as a potherb. They can be cooked as a vegetable.
The young roots are eaten raw or cooked. They are boiled in 2 changes of water to remove bitterness then added to soups and stews.
The sweet flowers can be used in salads or garnish in pickles.
The seeds yield an oil that can be used for salads or as a food supplement.
Young pods are steamed and eaten.

DESCRIPTION

A herb. It often grows as a biennial growing one year and flowering and seeding the next. It grows 1.5 m tall and spreads 40-50 cm wide. It has a long fleshy taproot. The leaves are in a ring near the base in the first year. In the second year an erect hairy stem with a smaller leaves appears. The stem is 1 m high. The flowers are yellow. They have 4 distinct petals. The flowers have a sweet scent in the evening. The fruit are hairy seed pods. The seeds are reddish-brown.

HABITAT

It is a temperate plant. It will grow in dry poor soils. In China it grows in open disturbed places from sea level to 1,500 m above sea level. In Argentina it grows from sea level to 1,000 m above sea level. In Hobart Botanical gardens. It suits hardiness zones 4-9. Tasmania Herbarium. In Sichuan and Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seeds.

Harvesting and Seed Production

The highest linolenic acid levels are achieved on poor soils with a low nitrogen level.

NOTES

There are about 125 Oenothera species. The oil from the seeds are used for Menstral problems. It also has an anti-inflammatory compound.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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