PLANT FACT SHEET

Althaea officinalis L.

GENUS *Althaea* **FAMILY** Malvaceae

COMMON NAMES Marsh mallow, White mallow

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

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

A tea is prepared from the flowers, leaves and powdered roots.
The leaves can be eaten raw or cooked. They are used in soups and vegetable dishes.
The roots can be eaten raw or cooked. They are boiled, sliced and fried with onions.
The water from cooking the roots can be used as an egg substitute for meringues.
It was used to flavour marshmallows.

DESCRIPTION

A herb plant which continues to grow year after year. It grows to 1.5 m high and spreads to 1 m across. The root is thick and white and sweet tasting. The stem is thick and woolly and dies down in winter. The leaves are oval and with a short stalk. The leaves can have 3 lobes. The edges of the leaves are irregular and toothed. They are thick and velvety and 8 cm long. The flowers are red, white or purple. The fruit is a hairy nutlet.

HABITAT

It is a temperate plant. It prefers salty marshes and damp soils on the edges of tidal rivers. It is resistant to frost. It cannot survive drought. It suits hardiness zones 3-10. In Yunnan. In Hobart Botanical Gardens.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed or by division of the plant.

NOTES

There are about 12 Althaea species. The roots of this one are used in medicine.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

REFERENCES

Ambasta S.P. (Ed.), 2000, The Useful Plants of India. CSIR India. p 32

Bircher, A. G. & Bircher, W. H., 2000, Encyclopedia of Fruit Trees and Edible Flowering Plants in Egypt and the Subtropics. AUC Press. p 21

Blamey, M and Grey-Wilson, C., 2005, Wild flowers of the Mediterranean. A & C Black London. p 133

Bodkin, F., 1991, Encyclopedia Botanica. Cornstalk publishing, p 72

Bonet, M. A. & Valles, J., 2002, Use of non-crop food vascular plants in Montseny biosphere reserve (Catalonia, Iberian Peninsula). International Journal of Food Sciences and Nutrition (2002) 53, 225–248

Bremness, L., 1994, Herbs. Collins Eyewitness Handbooks. Harper Collins. p 145

Brickell, C. (Ed.), 1999, The Royal Horticultural Society A-Z Encyclopedia of Garden Plants. Convent Garden Books. p 105

Brown, D., 2002, The Royal Horticultural Society encyclopedia of Herbs and their uses. DK Books. p 117

Cerne, M., 1992, Wild Plants from Slovenia used as Vegetables. Acta Horticulturae 318

Crawford, M., 2012, How to grow Perennial Vegetables. Green Books. p 131

Cundall, P., (ed.), 2004, Gardening Australia: flora: the gardener's bible. ABC Books. p 142

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

Elias, T.S. & Dykeman P.A., 1990, Edible Wild Plants. A North American Field guide. Sterling, New York p 146

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. 2. p 74

Facciola, S., 1998, Cornucopia 2: a Source Book of Edible Plants. Kampong Publications, p 147

Flora of Pakistan. www.eFloras.org

Hedrick, U.P., 1919, (Ed.), Sturtevant's edible plants of the world. p 46

Heywood, V.H., Brummitt, R.K., Culham, A., and Seberg, O. 2007, Flowering Plant Families of the World. Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew. p 201

Jackes, D. A., Edible Forest Gardens

Källman, S., 1980, FAO Report D 54012-H2, Sweden. "A literature study that is important for the knowledge and ideas about the selection and nutritional values of wild Swedish plants that can be used as food in emergency situations"

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 61

Kew Plants of the World Online

Kiple, K.F. & Ornelas, K.C., (eds), 2000, The Cambridge World History of Food. CUP p 1808

Lamberton, K (Ed.), 2004, The Australian gardening encyclodepia. Murdoch Books, NSW Australia. p 162

Lim, T. K., 2015, Edible Medicinal and Non Medicinal Plants. Volume 9, Modified Stems, Roots, Bulbs. Springer p 7

Mabey, R., 1973, Food for Free. A Guide to the edible wild plants of Britain, Collins. p 67

Michael, P., 2007, Edible Wild Plants and Herbs. Grub Street. London. p 144

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

Redzic, S. J., 2006, Wild Edible Plants and their Traditional Use in the Human Nutrition in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Ecology of Food and Nutrition, 45:189-232

Romanowski, N., 2007, Edible Water Gardens. Hyland House. p 80

Schneider, E., 2001, Vegetables from Amaranth to Zucchini: The essential reference. HarperCollins. p 379

Sher, H. et al, 2011, Ethnobotanical and Economic Observations of Some Plant Resources from the Northern Parts of Pakistan. Ethnobotany research & Applications 9:027-041 (As Malva officinalis)

Sher, Z., Hussain, F., & Ibrar, M., 2014, Traditional knowledge on plant resources of Ashezai and Salarzai Valleys, District Buner, Pakistan. African Journal of Plant Science. Vol. 8(1), pp. 42-53, January 2014 (As Malva officinalis)

Shikov, A. N. et al, 2017, Traditional and Current Food Use of Wild Plants Listed in the Russian Pharmacopoeia. Frontiers in Pharmacology. Vol. 8 Article 841

Simkova, K. et al, 2014, Ethnobotanical review of wild edible plants used in the Czech Republic. Journal of Applied Botany and Food Quality 88, 49-67

Singh, H.B., Arora R.K.,1978, Wild edible Plants of India. Indian Council of Agricultural Research, New Delhi. p17

Sitpayeva, G. T., et al, 2020, Crop wild relatives of Kazakhstani Tien Shan: Flora, vegetation, resources. Plant Diversity 42 (2020) 19-32

Sp. pl. 2:686. 1753

Tang ya, Malvaceae. Flora of China. p

Tardio, J., et al, 2006, Ethnobotanical review of wild edible plants in Spain. Botanical J. Linnean Soc. 152, 27-71

Torre, de la, L., et al, 2008, Enciclopedia de las Plantas Útiles del Ecuador. Herbario QCA. Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador. p 400

Uphof,

USDA, ARS, National Genetic Resources Program. Germplasm Resources Information Network - (GRIN). [Online Database] National Germplasm Resources Laboratory, Beltsville, Maryland. Available: www.ars-grin.gov/cgi-bin/npgs/html/econ.pl (10 April 2000)

Full reference list (5 more) at https://www.echocommunity.org/en/resources/d7cfe33a-468f-4a8e-9a57-d90620181485

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/d7cfe33a-468f-4a8e-9a57-d90620181485