PLANT FACT SHEET

Borago officinalis L.

GENUS *Borago* **FAMILY** Boraginaceae

COMMON NAMES Borage

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Herb, Spice, Flowers, Vegetable, Seeds - tea

The flowers and leaves are used to flavour liqueurs and summer drinks. The flowers are also sucked.
The young leaves can be used in salads. They have a cucumber like flavour. They are also fried in batter. They are also stuffed like grape leaves.
The older leaves are boiled and used in soups. They are also added to omelettes. They are used in pickles.
CAUTION: It may not be wise to eat large amounts over a long time due to Pyrrolizidine alkaloids.

DESCRIPTION

An annual herb. It is a sprawling plant. It can be 45-75 cm high and spread 45 cm wide. The stout stems and leaves are covered with stiff hairs. The lower leaves are on leaf stalks that have winged extensions near their base. The upper leaves are smaller and have blades without stalks. The flowers are blue or pink and star shaped. They have black centres. The flowers are on stalks 1.5-4 cm long. They are in clusters on the ends of branches. The nutlets are brownish-black. They are wrinkled and have a base which curves inward.

HABITAT

It is a temperate to Mediterranean climate plant. They can grow in full sun or light shade. They do best in a fairly rich, moist, well drained soil. In the tropics it can be grown in mountain regions. In Hobart Botanical gardens. It suits hardiness zones 5-10.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It is grown from seed. Seed are sown 12 mm deep. The taproot is easily damaged in transplanting. Plants drop seed easily and become self sown.

Harvesting and Seed Production

It grows quickly. The leaves are normally used fresh. They can be used dried but must be dried quickly in a dry well ventilated place.

NOTES

There are 3 Borago species.

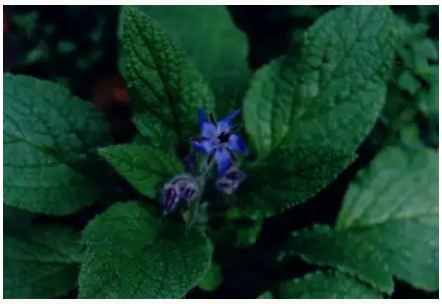
PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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