PLANT FACT SHEET

Allium schoenoprasum L.

GENUS *Allium* **FAMILY** Amaryllidaceae

COMMON NAMES Chives, Onion chives

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Flowers, Leaves, Root, Bulb, Herb, Spice, Vegetable

The mild flavoured leaves are eaten raw or used to flavour food.
They are used to flavour salads and meat.
The flowers are eaten and used as flavouring and garnish.

DESCRIPTION

An onion family plant. It is a herb which grows one year, then flowers the next. It is up to 30 cm tall. A narrow leafed onion which forms dense clumps. The leaves are hollow and narrow. They are 10-25 cm long by 0.1 cm in cross section. They are angular in cross section. Bulbs are not well developed. They can be 1-3 cm long by 0.5-1.5 cm across. The flowers are pink or purple. They are produced in a head where small flowers are on equal length stalks forming a rounded head.

HABITAT

A temperate plant. It is tolerant of cold and suits the highlands in the tropics. It needs a well drained soil. They can tolerate drought and grow on a wide range of soils. Fertile loam soils are best. In China it grows in meadows and damp valleys along streams between 2000-3000 m altitude. It suits hardiness zones 5-10.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown by division of the clump, or by seeds. Seeds are normally put in a nursery then transplanted. A spacing of 15-20 cm between plants is suitable. The leaves can be cut off several times.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Shoots can be harvested 70-100 days from planting. The outer leaves are cut 2 cm from the base leaving the central clump intact. Clumps should be replanted every 2-3 years.

NOTES

There are about 300-700 Allium species. Most species of Allium are edible (Flora of China). All alliums are edible but they may not all be worth eating! They have also been put in the family Alliaceae.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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