



PLANT FACT SHEET

Papaver somniferum L.

GENUS *Papaver* FAMILY Papaveraceae

COMMON NAMES Opium poppy, Breadseed poppy

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds, Herb, Spice, Oil, Leaves, Flowers

The seed are eaten raw or cooked. They are used on bread, cakes, rolls, and in soups, stews, rice dishes, curries and salad dressings.

The young leaves are edible raw or cooked.

An edible oil is obtained from the seed.

Caution: The capsule contains several alkaloids and is poisonous but the seeds are not.

DESCRIPTION

An annual plant which grows up to 60-150 cm high. It is 20 cm across. The leaves are coarsely toothed and clasp the stem. They are smooth and undivided. They are wavy. They are blue-green. The flowers are showy. They are cup shaped and red, white or purple. They are on long erect flower stalks. The fruit is a seed pod. It yields a milky sap. The capsule is 2-5 cm wide.

HABITAT

A temperate plant. It prefers a rich well drained sandy soil in a sunny position. It suits hardiness zones 7-10. Tasmania Herbarium.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed sown where the plants are to grow.

Harvesting and Seed Production

There are about 2 million seeds in a kg.

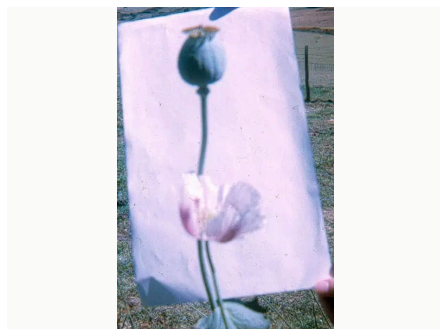
NOTES

There are 70-100 Papaver species. Opium poppy production is illegal in several countries.

PICTURES



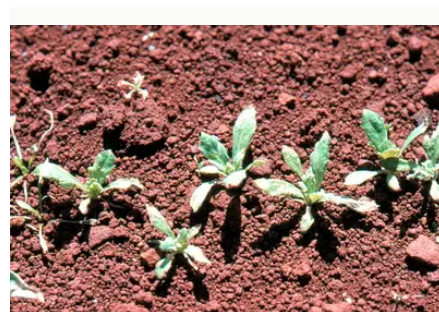
Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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