



PLANT FACT SHEET

Oxalis tuberosa Molina

GENUS *Oxalis* FAMILY Oxalidaceae

COMMON NAMES Oca

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Flowers, Leaves, Root, Tubers, Vegetable

The tubers are acid when fresh but are dried slightly then cooked and eaten. The bitter kinds are freeze dried and stored for later use. They can be used in soups and stews.

The young leaves and shoots can be eaten.

CAUTION Fresh tubers contain calcium oxalate.

DESCRIPTION

A small annual herb up to 30 cm high with leaves of 3 leaflets. The stems are round and succulent. The leaves are spirally arranged. The flowers are orange-yellow. Three different kinds of flowers occur associated with three different kinds of tubers. The tubers have scales which cover long deep eyes. Tubers vary considerably in shape. The tubers are wrinkled and vary in colour between red, orange, yellow, or white. Some varieties have bitter tubers. They are about 5-8 cm long and 2-4 cm across. The plant rarely sets seed in the field but seed can be produced by self pollinating. When seed form, they occur in 5 celled locules with 1-3 tiny seeds in each.

HABITAT

A temperate plant. It mostly grows in the Andes from Colombia to Chile at between 3,500 and 3,800 m altitude. The plant is frost hardy. They grow in the high altitude tropics. (2,800 - 4,560 m in the Andes). In Argentina it grows between 1,200-2,800 m above sea level. In the hot tropical lowlands, tubers perish quickly. A daylength of 9 hours is best for tuber formation. Vegetative top growth occurs under long day lengths. It suits hardiness zones 7-11.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from tubers or cut pieces of tubers which contain 1-3 eyes. Planting is normally done at the beginning of the rainy season and plants are weeded and soil mounded around them. A spacing of 20-40 cm x 20-36 cm is recommended.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Tubers mature in about 8 months. Average yields in the Andes are about 3.7 t / ha. After digging tubers are cured in the sun for several days.

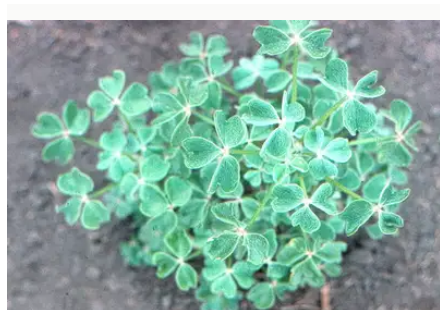
NOTES

There are about 500 *Oxalis* species.

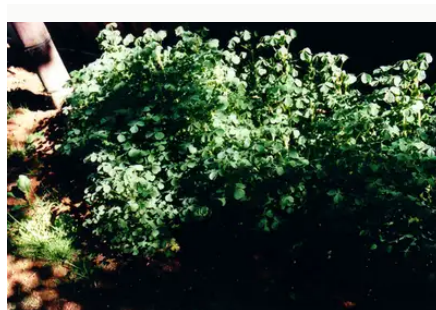
PICTURES



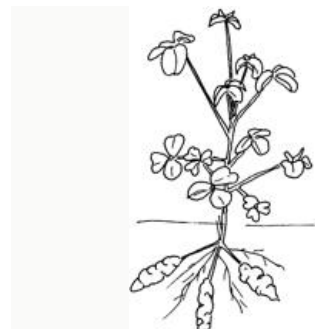
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