

SALAD MALLOW (*Corchorus olitorius*)

Description Upright, hardy, annual bush to 1 metre; of India origin, with oval, glossy, dark-green leaves to 10cm, with finely serrated margins. Yellow flowers, with five petals.

Plant seeds spring/summer/early autumn, and in tropical climates all year round. Soaking seed in hot water, and leaving to soak 6-12 hours is an advantage for germination. If seed capsules are not picked at maturity, the plant will self-seed, and seedlings will come up next season, providing a supply of lush, nutritious leaves.

Constituents: mucin, rich in chlorophyll, protein 20.4% **Vitamins:** A at 3500 IU per 100 grams of leaves, B1, B2, B3, C 64mg

Minerals: calcium 1432mg per 100 grams, phosphorus 703mg, potassium 3068mg, magnesium 284mg, iron 7mg, manganese 3 mg, sulphur 235mg, zinc 4mg, silica 8mg, sodium 12mg **Actions:** tonic, anti-diarrheal, anti-tussive, demulcent, expectorant, anti-inflammatory, anti-oxidant, digestive

Medicinal uses In many tropical and third world countries; the leaves are highly regarded as a tonic. Fresh or dried leaves are used as a tea, and valued for *strengthening and invigorating the body*. Leaves are rich in mucin, a valuable mucilaginous healing substance, used as an aid to the removal of mucus and toxins from the body.

Eat leaves to alleviate the following complaints: respiratory conditions, tonsillitis, bronchitis, vomiting, fatigue, diarrhea, dysentery, lymphatic ailments, constipation, bowel inflammation, liver and urinary problems including too-frequent urination. Leaves made as a tea are drunk for speedy delivery of baby, to remove afterbirth after delivery, and to increase milk supply. As a wash, the tea is used to bathe sore and inflamed eyes, wash wounds, bites, rashes, and as a hair conditioner. **Tea** is made with 1 tsp. of dried herb or 15cm stem with leaves (finely chopped) to 1 cup of boiling water. The tea can be dressed up with peppermint or other flavouring herbs.

Several years ago Bill called for herbs. Then he called quite some time later to say he eats salad mallow by the handful and finds it wonderfully health promoting, and very effective for sinus relief. He also dries leaves, which he uses as a tea in the winter, when the plant is not growing.

Dianne found that in her pregnancy she suffered with fatigue. From her 5th month, she called regularly for fresh cut salad mallow, which she ate daily, to bring her energy levels back. Her surge of vitality was perhaps due to the protein content of the leaves and the high vitamin A and potassium.

A leaf analysis at a Brisbane laboratory, for mineral content, revealed, *exceptionally high potassium, at 3068mg per 100 grams of leaf, making it possibly the richest plant source of potassium, that we can grow*. It appears that this content is only surpassed by dulse (8060mg) and kelp (5273mg), which would rarely be part of our daily diets, and not able to be grown in the garden. Potassium's role is vital to muscular tissue, especially to the maintenance and repair of such tissue, which is important for strength and vigour. Potassium is essential, for digestion of carbohydrates and the liver's conversion to glucose, utilised as an energy source. Potassium aids blood and oxygen circulation, and assists with elimination of blood impurities and toxic wastes. Some women who suffer unpleasant menopausal symptoms, have found relief, by taking a teaspoon of salad mallow seeds in ½ cup of water, over a short period of time.

Daily recommended intake of potassium is between 2000–6000mg. Note, if food is cooked, much of the potassium is leached into the water, and possibly discarded down the kitchen sink. A salad made with salad mallow can provide potassium in a high quantity for our daily needs, plus other minerals, vitamins and protein.

Culinary uses Fresh picked salad mallow leaves have a *cool, refreshing aroma and a pleasant flavour* with a slightly glutinous consistency. Eat the tasty leaves fresh in hand, or added to salads and sandwiches. Early in the morning, pick a bunch of stems and place in a glass of water on the table, then at each mealtime; eat the leaves with other foods prepared. Add to meat and savoury dishes, or dried and crushed to a powder to add to meals for a protein source or as a thickener. Serve the leaves raw or lightly steamed with a dressing of olive oil and lemon juice. Use leaves as a substitute for spinach in recipes. A traditional soup is made in Egypt with the leaves, garlic, coriander, and meat of mutton, chicken, rabbit or goose. Immature seed capsules are used like okra in recipes; sliced and added to salads or any cooked dish. As the leaves are a high protein, this hardy plant is a *valuable survival food*, to have growing; or to dry and store as a crushed powder, which may be added to meals in the future.

The petite, yellow flowers can garnish savoury or sweet dishes. Regularly picking the *baby* capsules, stems and leaves will keep this annual bush producing over an extended period. I regard salad mallow as one of the most valuable greens we can grow and use regularly. Dried seeds are bitter, however, when soaked in water, the mixture is used as a digestive, and also to benefit the liver and kidneys.

Extract from Book **“How Can I Use Herbs In My Daily Life?”** by **Isabell Shipard** For more details Phone **Shipard's Herb Farm**, (07) 54411101.

