

Wild uncultivated edible plants of India

Part 9

(.....after part 8)

***Portulaca oleracea* L.**

Family: Portulacaceae

The plant, globally known as purslane, is an herb belonging to Portulacaceae. It is widely used across the world for its culinary and ornamental purposes. Locally known as kulfa or nunia or lunia, the herb is quite popular in urban and rural kitchens of India and is available even with vegetable vendors. Often frequented in moist and shady places, the plant is widely distributed in India as a common roadside weed. Due to its frequent medicinal use worldwide in different traditional medicines, it was named 'Global Panacea' by World Health Organization. The plant is loaded with high vitamin A, and also with vitamin C and B-complex (like riboflavin, niacin, and pyridoxine). It also provides highest dietary minerals such as potassium (494 mg/100 g) magnesium (68 mg/100 g), calcium (65 mg/100 g), phosphorus (44 mg/100 g), and iron (1.99 mg/100 g). Enriched with the beneficial omega-3 fatty acids, it appears to be a superfood and very effective in treating cardiovascular disorders and allows protection to the mucous membranes. In India, it is widely used to make stir-fries and side dishes for rice when cooked with dhal. The blanched leaves can be pulsed and can be used as a base to cook paneer or eggs. The underlying reason for its popularity is perhaps for its taste similar to spinach and that has permanently placed it in many home gardens. However, in rural or peri-urban areas, it has been sporadically picked up by villagers as need be. Also, it is a very popular leafy green among many indigenous people.

