

Stellaria media* (L.) Vill.*Family: Caryophyllaceae**

An herbaceous member common along the agricultural fields and roadside areas, the plant marks its presence by tiny white flowers with deeply incised petals. Fondly known as Chikweed in many parts, it is a fairly known vegetable among the rural people who are still attached to the traditional practices. The edible use of the plant as a boiled vegetable is reported from the Kumaon and Kinnaur region of the western Himalayas, and also from Assam (known as *Morolia*), Manipur (as *Yerum-keirum*), Arunachal, and Mizoram (*Chang-kalrit*). In Assam, it has been popularly used in fish curry preparation along with jujube, fenugreek seeds, and small fish. In Manipur, quite similar to its neighboring state, the plant is an ingredient of *Kangsoi* - a mixed dish prepared with boiled vegetables, fermented and dried fish, as well as other spicy additions. In Himachal Pradesh, the plant (known as *Padyala*) is used in the preparation of *Kachru*, a mixture made up of *Besan*, spices, and plant leaves. Nutritionally, this herb is a good source of vitamin A and C and other essential micronutrients.

