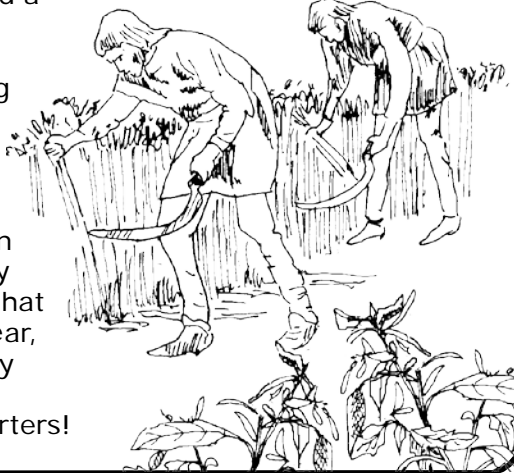


# COMMON LAMBSQUARTERS Science Page

## DID YOU KNOW?

In 9th century England, the yearly calendar was divided into four quarters. August 1st, called Lammas Quarter, marked the start of one of the quarter periods. On that day people had a festival to celebrate harvesting the first wheat of the season. They often ate a leafy green at that time of year, which they called lambsquarters!

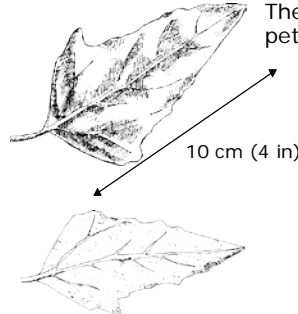


## THE COMMON LAMBSQUARTERS PLANT

Lambsquarters is an annual. It grows from about 1 to 2 meters (3-6 ft) high in one growing season.

Leaves are shaped sort of like triangles.

Tiny green flowers are at the tips of branches. They have no petals.

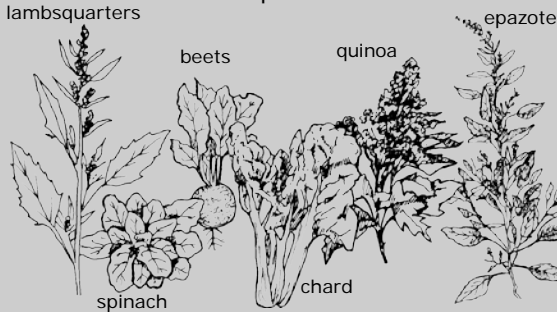


The underside of leaves are covered with a white powder.



## CLASSIFYING COMMON LAMBSQUARTERS

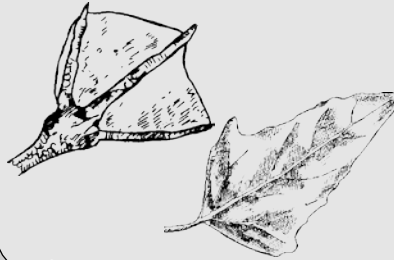
**FAMILY**  
Chenopodiaceae



Members of this family are grown as root and leaf vegetables, flowers, herbs, and grains.

**GENUS**  
Chenopodium

In Greek, this means "goose foot." Some members of this family have leaves shaped like a goose foot.



**SPECIES**  
album

In Latin, "album" means white. The flowers and undersides of leaves are whitish.



## A FRIEND. . .

Young lambsquarters can be eaten raw or cooked like spinach. It contains more iron, protein, vitamin B2, and vitamin C than either spinach or cabbage. Seeds can be eaten raw. They can also be dried and ground, and then used in hot cereals or baked goods.

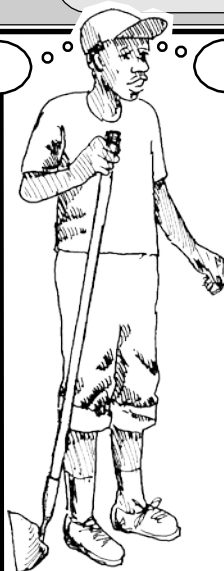
In winter, song birds eat the tiny lambsquarters' seeds.



## ...OR FOE?

One lambsquarters plant can produce 75,000 seeds. The seeds can sprout and grow in almost any soil. Lambsquarters can outgrow most crop plants, and quickly take over any bare soil.

Lambsquarters grows very quickly, but at least it's easy to pull up.

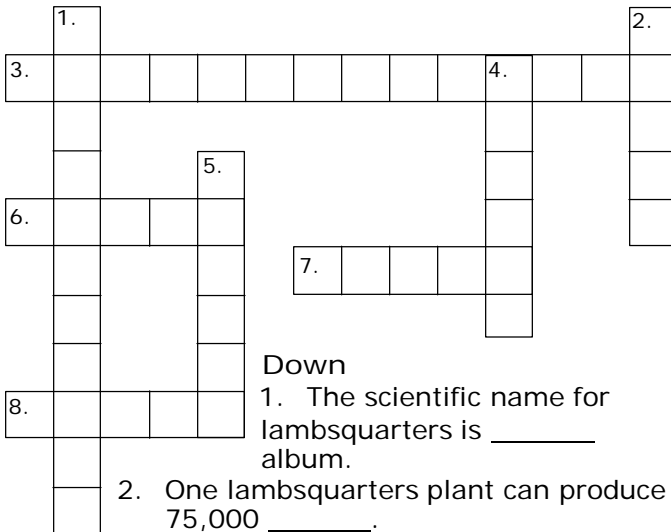




## CROSSWORD PUZZLE

### Across

- Lambsquarters belongs to this family.
- The leaves of lambsquarters are shaped like a \_\_\_\_\_ foot.
- The underside of lambsquarters leaves are \_\_\_\_\_.
- In winter, the seeds of lambsquarters are an important food for \_\_\_\_\_.



### Down

- The scientific name for lambsquarters is \_\_\_\_\_ album.
- One lambsquarters plant can produce 75,000 \_\_\_\_\_.
- Young lambsquarters leaves can be eaten raw or \_\_\_\_\_.
- The flowers of lambsquarters have no \_\_\_\_\_.



## SPOTLIGHT ON RESEARCH

### Eat Your Weeds!

You're not likely to find wild plants such as lambsquarters in the supermarket. But in many parts of the world, people still eat wild plants every day. Scientists are beginning to realize that this is a good thing!

A group of scientists studied wild plants in the Coruh Valley in Turkey. They wanted to find

out what wild plants people eat, and what nutrients are in these wild plants. People in Turkey use about 40 wild plants as vegetables. The scientists chose 8 of these wild plants to study, including lambsquarters.

They collected plants from roadsides, fields, and pastures. They got rid of the plant parts that are not usually eaten (in most cases the older leaves and stems are not edible). They dried the edible parts in an oven. Then they ground the dried plant parts. They measured the nutrients in the dried plant parts, including vitamin C, protein, potassium, phosphorus, calcium, iron, sodium, and magnesium.

The scientists discovered that the wild plants they studied have more nutrients than some of the vegetables we grow. For example, all the wild species were higher in protein and most of the essential minerals than lettuce, spinach, and cabbage. Lambsquarters has more than twice as much potassium, five times as much magnesium, and three times as much calcium as these vegetables. So what can we learn from this study? Some weeds are good to eat!

Source: Vildirim, E. Dursun, A. and Turan, M. (2001). Determination of the nutrition nontents of the wild plants used as vegetables in Upper Coruh Valley. *Turkish Journal of Botany*. 25: 367-371.



## RIDDLE

What do you get when you divide a lamb into four equal parts?

Answer: Lambsquarters

**CAUTION:** Never pick weeds to eat unless you are very sure you can identify them. Do not harvest weeds that grow near roadsides or that may have been sprayed with chemicals. These plants may not be safe to eat.

Crossword puzzle answers  
Across: 3. Chenopodiaceae; 6. goose; 7. white; 8. birds.  
Down: 1. Chenopodium; 2. seeds; 4. cooked; 5. petals.



## STEAMED LAMBSQUARTERS

Yield: 4 servings

### Ingredients

- \* 1 pound (0.9 kg) lambsquarters (about four handfuls; tender, young leaves and stalks are best)
- \* 1 cup (240 ml) water
- \* 1 teaspoon (5 ml) olive oil
- \* 1 teaspoon (5 ml) garlic, finely chopped
- \* salt

### Instructions

- Steam the greens until tender-crisp (about three to five minutes).
- Remove the greens from the steamer and place onto serving dish.
- Sprinkle olive oil over the greens.
- Top with minced fresh garlic.
- Sprinkle with salt to taste.