

# Purslane

*Portulaca oleracea*

## A Desirable 'Weed'

All our food crops are descended from weeds. But some of them still bear a more heavy resemblance to their weedy forebears than others.

One of the most common weeds in backyard gardens and on the roadsides in Queensland is purslane – and it comes up on its own practically anywhere.

To most people, the succulent plant that sprawls low to the ground and often from cracks in bricks or pavers can seem nasty-looking.

People from many cultures around the world have long appreciated its virtues. It is eaten extensively around the Mediterranean region. The Russians dry and preserve it for the winter.

Modern nutritional science has proven what the ancients instinctively knew—it's good for you! Purslane is one of the best sources in the plant world for omega-3 fatty acid – and all parts of the plant are edible.

Purslane is very versatile in the kitchen. It can be eaten raw in a salad where the juicy mucilaginous leaves and stems add a mildly acid, piquant flavor. Or use it steamed, stir-fried or pureed. It's great added to curries and stews.

It's in season now. When you discover a plant, sprinkle its tiny black seeds randomly in your garden for a continuing harvest.

