

Allium schoenoprasum

[Synonyms : *Allium alpinum*, *Allium buhseanum*, *Allium gredense*, *Allium montanum*, *Allium oliganthum*, *Allium purpurascens*, *Allium raddeanum*, *Allium schmitzii* var. *duriminium*, *Allium schoenoprasum* var. *alpinum*, *Allium sibiricum*]

CHIVE is a bulbous perennial. Native to cool European regions and to Asia (particularly Siberia) it has pink, white or purple flowers.

It is also known as *Aglio d'India* (Italian), *Aglio di serpe* (Italian), *Aglio ungherese* (Italian), *Ail civette* (French-Canadian), *Ajo morisco* (Spanish), *Alho-de-Espanha* (Brazilian, Portuguese), *Aljma* (Serbian), *Basal* (Portuguese), *Bawang kechai* (Sundanese), *Bei cong* (Chinese), *Bieslook* (Dutch), *Blühender Schnittlauch* (German), *Brûlotte* (French-Canadian), *Brûlotte sauvage* (French-Canadian), *Ceboleta de França* (Portuguese), *Cebolatas de França* (Portuguese), *Cebolinha* (Portuguese), *Cebolinha-miúda* (Brazilian, Portuguese), *Cebolleta* (Spanish), *Cebollino comun* (Spanish), *Cebollino francés* (Spanish), *Cebollinos* (Spanish), *Chaibu* (Japanese), *Chaibusu* (Japanese), *Ciboulette* (French), *Cives* (French-Canadian), *Cives farouches* (French-Canadian), *Civette* (French), *Czosnek szczypiorek* (Polish), *Czosnek tatarczka* (Polish), *Dobrinjak* (Croatian), *Drobnjak* (Croatian, Slovenian), *Erba cipollina* (Italian), *Fijn bieslook* (Dutch), *Graslauk* (Norwegian), *Gräslök* (Swedish), *Hia-Ye-Ts'ung* (Chinese), *Hom paen* (Thai), *Kui chaai bai klom* (Thai), *Kui chaai farang* (Thai), *Langkeo* (Javanese), *Luk-drobnjak* (Croatian), *Luk rezanets* (Russian), *Luk skoroda* (Russian), *Mountain garlic*, *Oignon sauvage* (French-Canadian), *Onion grass*, *Pažitka pobřežní* (Czech), *Petite ciboule* (French), *Planinski drobnjak* (Slovenian), *Purløg* (Danish), *Purple garlic*, *Ruoholaukka* (Finnish), *Ruohosipuli* (Finnish), *Rush leek*, *Schinoprasso* (Greek), *Schnittlauch* (German), *Seifys* (Welsh), *Seithes*, *Seives*, *Seiyō asatsuki* (Japanese), *Ŝenoprazo* (Esperanto), *Shnitt luk* (Russian), *Siberian chive*, *Sitan vlašac* (Serbian), *Sitni luk* (Serbian), *Siv* (Creole), *Skoroda* (Russian), *Snijlook* (Dutch), *Šnitling* (Serbian), *Szczypiorek* (Polish), *Tičji luk* (Croatian), *Vlasac* (Croatian, Serbian), *Vlašac* (Serbian), *Vlašik* (Serbian), *Vlaštica* (Serbian), *Wild chives*, *Xiao cong* (Chinese), and *Xi xiang cong* (Chinese).

Chive is a protected plant in the wild in the Irish Republic under the Flora Protection Order 1987 and in Northern Ireland under the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985.

Schoenoprasum is said to be made up of Greek *schoinos* (rush) and *prason* (leek) components with reference to the leaf.

The high esteem with which chives were favoured for hundreds and hundreds of years into the 19th Century is well illustrated by a traditional story. Around 328 BC, prior to Alexander the Great's marriage to the Scythian Princess Roxana, the Scythians heard he was only a few thousand miles away and marching towards them. Desperate to stem his believed aggressive advance they turned to their only asset chives (which apart from any other qualities had some reputation then as an aphrodisiac) and offered them successfully to Alexander as a gift.

Many records confirm the use of chives beyond their native lands. The plant has been grown throughout Asia (it was embraced by the ancient Chinese cultures) and the Mediterranean since a time long before the Christian era. There are even those pundits who suspect that chives had reached North America directly from the Siberian region before it ever

appeared in western Europe. (It is interesting to note that authorities only seem to have found recorded evidence of the use of chives among Alaskans, Indian tribes in Alaska, and Inuit tribes – with little or no mention of the very many other North American Indian tribes who moved further south on that Continent. The leaves were used primarily as flavouring for fish and soup, and they were fried with meat and added to salads by some of the Cree tribe, as well as the Alaskans, the Tanana and the Koyukon Indians and the Inuktitut and Alaskan Inuits.) Today sometimes they can even be found growing in Java (now an Indonesian island).

It is believed by some experts that chives were introduced to Britain by the Romans.

Chives once attracted a reputation for being able to give protection against the evil eye specifically and misfortune generally, and at one time despite the alleged overall regard it was also believed that if you ate chives raw the fumes would affect the brain and cause troubled sleep and eyesight problems.