

*Chenopodium vulvaria*

[Synonyms : *Atriplex vulvaria*, *Chenopodium olidum*]

**STINKING GOOSEFOOT** is an annual. Native to Europe (including Britain) it has green flowers.

It is also known as *Ansérine fétide* (French), Arrach, *Atriplice puzzolana* (Italian), *Bianche snile* (Channel Islander-Guernsey), *Chenopodio fetido* (Italian), Dog's arrach, *Ghobbejra tinten* (Maltese), Goat's arrach, Goosefoot, *Llysgwyn Drewllyd* (Welsh), *Merlík smrdutý* (Czech), Netchweed, *Stinkender Gänsefuss* (German), Stinking arrach, Stinking goosegrass, Stinking motherwort, *Stinkmålla* (Swedish), *Vulvaire* (French), and Wild arrach.

The whole plant smells strongly of stale salt fish.

Warning – stinking goosefoot should not be taken internally if suffering from kidney or rheumatic disorders. In large amounts it can cause weakness, fatigue, fluid retention, bloodstained diarrhoea, and yellow pigmentation and photosensitivity of the skin. It can be poisonous for animals.

In Britain this is a protected species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

*Vulvaria* is derived from Latin *vulvarius* (foul smell).

When the plant is grown on rich soil, short shoots can be cooked like garden asparagus (*Asparagus officinalis*). It is the fetid smell that has precluded the plant's inclusion in the cooking pot. The unpleasantness of this is well illustrated by the fact that in times gone by there have been some who thought that the plant's odour, alone, would be enough to cure barrenness in women.

Medicinally, stinking goosefoot has been used for centuries. European herbalists used to prescribe the plant itself for many female disorders. It can still be used today, particularly for period problems.