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Malva parviflora

LEAST MALLOW is an annual. Native from the Mediterranean to Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia, it has tiny, bluish-pink flowers.

It is also known as Cheeseweed mallow, Egyptian mallow, *Hobbejza tal-warda zghira* (Maltese), *Kiesieblaar* (Afrikaans), *Khubbāz* (Arabic), *Kvarnkattost* (Swedish), *Lit* (Ethiopian), Little mallow, *Malva* (Spanish), Marsh mallow, *Panirak* (Hindi, Punjabi), *Slez* (Slovak), *Sléz malokvětý* (Czech), Small mallow, and Small whorled cheeseweed.

The flowers are pollinated by bees and other insects.

Warning – there have been unsubstantiated reports of animal poisoning in various countries other than Britain.

Parviflora is derived from Latin *parvi-* (small, little) and *-flora* (flowered) meaning ‘small flowered’.

The leaves are eaten locally as a vegetable.

After least mallow came to the attention of some North American Indian tribes, the Tohono O’Odam Indians used it for forage for their pigs.

Both the Diegueño and Tohono O’Odam Indians used the plant to wash their hair – and the former appears to have believed that a root or leaf decoction was especially helpful in countering dandruff.

In the Miwok tribe a plant poultice was applied to sores or boils, while the Digueño Indians used a leaf or root decoction to ease a baby’s fever.

Medicinally, the plant has been used locally to ease internal and external inflammation.