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Smilax aspera

[Synonyms : *Smilax maculata*]

ITALIAN SMILAX is an evergreen climbing shrub. Native to the Mediterranean it has small sweet-scented, white, greenish or pale yellow flowers.

It is also known as *Arkoudóvatos* (Greek), *Arkóvatos* (Greek), Cat brier, Common smilax, Green brier, Mediterranean smilax, *Přestup drsný* (Czech), Prickly ivy, Rough bindweed, *Salsa pajzana* (Maltese), Salsaparilla, Sarsaparilla, *Stechwinde* (German), and *Zarzaparrilla* (Spanish).

Aspera is Latin (rough to the touch) with reference to the stems.

The shrub's qualities are the same as those of sarsaparilla (*Smilax aristolochiaefolia*) but less potent and it is often used to adulterate sarsaparilla.

The young shoots can be eaten like garden asparagus (*Asparagus officinalis*).