

Common Purslane (*Portulaca oleracea*)

It is a succulent herb with a sprawling growth habit, often mistaken for a weed but actually a nutritional and ecological gem.

Care Instructions

- **Light:** Thrives in full sun; tolerates partial shade in extreme heat.
- **Watering:** Drought-tolerant. Water only when the top inch of soil is dry. Overwatering can lead to root rot.
- **Soil:** Prefers well-draining, sandy or loamy soil with a pH of 5.5–7.5.
- **Temperature:** Ideal range is 18–24°C (65–75°F). Can tolerate up to 38°C (100°F).
- **Fertilizer:** Minimal feeding needed. Use a balanced fertilizer every 4–6 weeks during the growing season.
- **Pruning:** Trim leggy stems to encourage bushier growth. Deadhead spent flowers to promote blooming.
- **Propagation:** Easily grown from seeds or stem cuttings. Seeds germinate in 7–10 days.

Ecological Benefits

- **Pollinator Magnet:** Its yellow flowers attract bees, butterflies, and other beneficial insects.
- **Ground Cover:** Dense growth helps suppress weeds and prevent soil erosion.
- **Soil Health:** Improves soil structure and retains moisture. Can even help remediate saline soils.
- **Biodiversity Booster:** Supports a diverse garden ecosystem by providing habitat and nectar.

Other Interesting Details

- **Edible Superfood:** Rich in omega-3 fatty acids, vitamins A, C, and E, and minerals like magnesium and potassium.
- **Flavor Profile:** Slightly tangy and lemony with a crisp texture—great in salads, soups, and stir-fries.
- **Medicinal Uses:** Traditionally used to treat inflammation, digestive issues, and skin conditions.
- **Photosynthesis Prodigy:** Uniquely uses both C4 and CAM pathways, allowing it to thrive in drought.

- **Cultural History:** Mentioned by ancient Greeks and used in traditional Chinese medicine. Known as “verdolaga” in Latin America.
- **Companion Plant:** Guides neighboring plant roots deeper into the soil and shares moisture.
- **Fast Grower:** Can produce up to 193,000 seeds per plant—watch out for its spreading habit!