

PURSLANE

HOW TO IDENTIFY?

- It's a succulent plant with thick, rounded leaves and reddish stems that can store water.
- It grows horizontally on the ground, forming a dense, circular mat.
- Flowers are small and only open on **SUNNY MORNINGS**.
- Looks similar to spurge, which is poisonous.

IS THIS ANNUAL A PROBLEM?

- **NO.** It is very nutritious, with high levels of omega-3 fatty acids, anti-oxidants, vitamins and minerals.
- Can be added to salads, sauteed like spinach, or used in soups and stews (it will thicken stews).
- Has a slightly lemony flavour and is less bitter than many other edible weeds.
- If fed to chickens it will increase the omega-3 fatty acids in their eggs.
- **YES.** It spreads aggressively - one plant can produce up to **240,000** seeds!

HOW DOES IT GROW?

- Seeds need light and temperatures over 24C to germinate.
- Grows in almost any soil and is drought tolerant.
- Likes **DISTURBED** soil and full sun (doesn't grow in shade).
- Seeds can remain viable in the soil for up to **40 YEARS!**



Portulaca oleracea

HOW TO CONTROL?

- Hoeing and tilling may not help because pieces of purslane will grow into new plants.
- Hand-pull it when young, making sure to get all the roots.
- **MULCH INSTEAD** of tilling, to prevent new seeds from germinating.

Sources: Kampman, M. *Master Gardeners: Many consider purslane a weed, but it's a powerhouse of nutrition.* Marin Independent Journal. July 19, 2018.
Royer, F. and Dickinson, R. *Weeds of Canada and the Northern United States.* 1999.

Image: Ethel Aardvark, CC BY 3.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons