

Sourgrass



Scientific Name: *Oxalis stricta*

Common Names: Oxalis, Sour Clover, Yellow Wood Sorrel

Biology: Sourgrass flowers are a bright yellow in color and rather small. This flower has five petals that encircle ten stamen and a singular pistil (Brandeis). The clover-shaped leaves of the yellow wood sorrel are small yet grow in clumps to give the appearance of a ground canopy (Brandeis).

Description: The leaves and flowers are often eaten raw and have a sour citrus-like flavor. Unlike the Redwood variety, the yellow-flowered species are non-native to California and are often found in disturbed areas as well as growing in community parks, lawns and gardens (Brandeis).

Availability: Perennial; Available all year. It can dry out in hot weather or die out in very cold weather but when opportunity strikes it will quickly grow out again (ForageSF).

Nutritional Value: This plant contains high levels of vitamin C, potassium oxalate, and oxalic acid, the last two of which can be potentially hazardous to people with kidney disease or arthritis. Raw spinach, beets, and chard also contain this warning (ForageSF, Brandeis).

Health Benefits: Medicinally, in moderate dosages, wood sorrel has been said to be cooling, diuretic, relieves indigestion, and astringent. It's also attributed with blood cleansing properties (Brandeis).

Applications: Flowers are eaten raw and can be added to salads. The leaves can also be chewed as a thirst quencher. The leaves can be turned into a lemon-flavoured drink. Mashing the whole plant produces a dye that's between orange and yellow (Brandeis).

Cultural Geography: The weedy type (yellow flowered) is invasive and provides little wildlife value, so as a forager you can take as much as you desire. Redwood sorrel is an ornamental and native forest plant. If you are going to harvest, only pinch a few leaves off to avoid overharvesting (Brandeis).

Citations:

<https://www.foragesf.com/blog/2019/12/5/oxalis-thats-sour-grass-to-all-you-kids-out-there>

http://www.bio.brandeis.edu/fieldbio/Wildflowers_Kimonis_Kramer/PAGES/YELLOWWOODSORREL_PAGE_FINAL.html