

## *Sonchus oleraceus*

This leafy vegetable is part of Asteraceae family. Is annual herb with a hollow, upright stem of up to 30-100 cm high. Prefers full sun and can tolerate most soil conditions. The flowers are hermaphroditic, and common pollinators include bees and flies. It spreads by seeds being carried by wind or water.

### **Nutritional value**

- Rich source of carotenes, flavonoids and vitamin C
- High content of abundant fatty acids, including  $\omega$ 3-polyunsaturated fatty acids ( $\omega$ 3-PUFAs)
- Low cholesterol

### **Environmental impact**

- Resilient
- Water-energy efficient
- Resistant to diseases
- Suitable for rocky soils

### **Uses**

The edible part of the plant are the young leaves, which can be consumed raw or cooked, for example as an ingredient to salads mix or soups and cooked like spinach.

### **Current status – Future perspectives**

Even it is native to Europe and western Asia, is not systematically cultivated but mainly grows as a wild weed. It could be expanded in Euro-Med and some Central European countries.



**Picture 1:** Sonchus plant at the base of tree trunk



**Picture 2:** Sonchus young plant (left) and overmature for consumption plant (right)

## *Sonchus oleraceus*

### Vertical Leader: Ege University (EGE)



Aristotle University of Thessaloniki  
(AUTH) - Greece



ALMA MATER STUDIORUM –  
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(UNIBO) - Italy

The two pilot cases' locations were selected with view to altering the crop's growth system in southern Europe – Mediterranean, from wild plants to fully cultivated.

**Greece (AUTH)** is a typical Mediterranean country where environmental conditions are mild in the winter, and warm and dry in the summer.

**Italy (UNIBO)** is a typical Mediterranean country where environmental conditions are mild. This location is ideal to test the crop's adaptation to southern European – Mediterranean conditions.



**Picture 3:** Pilot cases' locations

#### **Project progress**

Satisfactory quantity seeds of one ecotype was collected, further search for another one.