



The Avicultural Society of New South Wales (ASNSW)

(Founding in 1940 as the Parrot & African Lovebird Society of Australia)

Chickweed (*Stellaria media*)

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Chickweed is a name that is given to many plants, some of which are not really Chickweeds at all, but totally different weeds. The true Chickweed (*Stellaria media*) is one of the very best of all our wild green foods. It has stood the test of many generations, and has never had a serious criticism.

You may use it at any stage of its life with certainty of good results, and in its maturity it is a favourite food with most hens for their nestling birds.

Almost all British birds delight in it. [Goldfinch](#), [Greenfinch](#), [Chaffinch](#), [Bullfinch](#) and [Linnet](#) eat it greedily in their wild state, and so do [Blackbirds](#), [Skylarks](#) and [Yellow Buntings](#). Even with foreign birds and [Canaries](#) it is equally welcome.



The green leaves and shoots of chickweed are rich in just those vital chemical elements which are essential to good health and fitness, and have for long been known to have a most pronounced good effect upon the blood stream of the birds to which they are regularly given.

The stems may be anything from 6" to 18" in length, and are usually more or less prostrate, for at any rate a great part of their length, upon the ground where they grow. They are somewhat swollen at the joints, are very brittle, and have a peculiar single line of fine hairs running along their entire length, but alternating from side to side at every pair of leaves.

The leaves themselves are roughly egg shaped, but end in fairly sharp points, and always grow in opposite pairs along the stems. The lower leaves, however, are often almost heart shaped, and have quite decided stalks, while the upper ones usually have no stalks at all but are seated directly upon the branches from which they spring.

Chickweed flowers each have five very small white petals, but each of these is so deeply divided down its centre that you may easily be deceived into thinking there are really ten. If you take a single blossom to pieces, however, you can decide the question in a moment. It should be noted, too, that in the flowers of this weed the white petals are actually shorter than the green sepals which are placed beneath them.

The little shiny seed pods usually occur at the end of drooping wiry stalks.

Chickweed grows plentifully in fields and gardens everywhere and may be found in a fit state for gathering in any month of the twelve.

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