

Discover the Flora of Our Campus

Onion (*Allium cepa*)

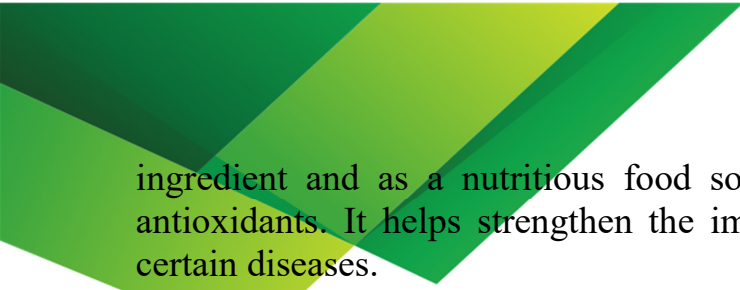
Onion (*Allium cepa*) is a biennial or perennial bulbous vegetable plant belonging to the lily family (*Liliaceae*). The plant forms a large underground bulb, which is the edible part used as food. Its leaves are hollow, cylindrical, and green, with a tube-like structure. The flowers are small, white or pale purple in color, and form umbrella-shaped clusters. Onion is rich in sulfur-containing compounds that give it its strong smell and distinctive taste.

The homeland of *Allium cepa* is considered to be Central Asia and the Near East. This plant has been cultivated since ancient times and has spread to all temperate and subtropical regions of the world. Today, it is grown in almost every country as an important agricultural crop. In Azerbaijan, onion is also one of the main vegetable crops and is widely cultivated.



Onion prefers sunny areas and becomes more productive under good light conditions. It grows best in light, fertile, and well-drained soils. The plant is sensitive to excessive moisture, as it may cause the bulb to rot. It is moderately resistant to drought, but regular irrigation is required for good productivity. Its growing season generally lasts from spring until late summer.

Onion is one of the essential vegetables in human nutrition and is highly important both as a flavoring



ingredient and as a nutritious food source. It contains vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. It helps strengthen the immune system and may aid in preventing certain diseases.

From an ecological perspective, onion cultivation plays an important role in agricultural systems. Its flowers can serve as a nectar source for pollinating insects. However, intensive cultivation may create environmental impacts due to the use of fertilizers and irrigation.

Allium cepa is mainly used in the food industry. It is consumed fresh in salads, cooked dishes, and preserved foods. It is also used in dried or powdered form as a spice.

In traditional medicine, onion has been used as an antiseptic and as a remedy against colds. Some of its extracts are also applied in the cosmetic and pharmaceutical industries.

Onion is one of the oldest cultivated plants and has been an essential part of the human diet for thousands of years. In ancient Egypt, onion was considered a sacred plant.

Another interesting fact is that the reason onions cause tears when cut is due to sulfur compounds released into the air, which irritate the nerves in the eyes.

Overall, *Allium cepa* is one of the world's most important vegetable crops because of its nutritional value, economic importance, and cultural history.

