

# Discover the Flora of Our Campus

## Wild onion (*Allium*)

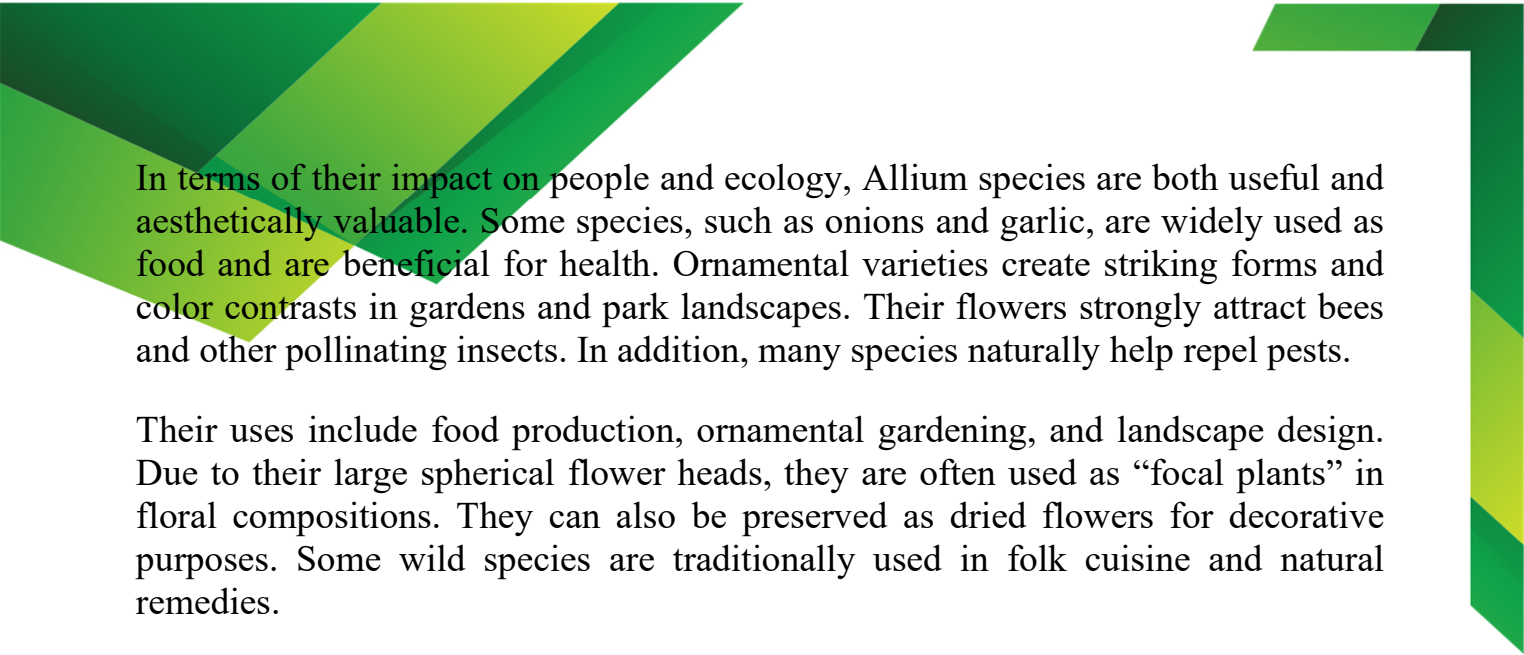
*Allium*, commonly known as “wild onion” or “ornamental onion,” is a genus of perennial plants belonging to the onion family. These plants are distinguished by their spherical or semi-spherical flower clusters that grow on thin, upright stems. The flowers consist of numerous tiny star-shaped petals and are usually seen in shades of purple, lilac, white, and sometimes pink. Their leaves are narrow, elongated, and have a characteristic onion-like aroma.



The native range of *Allium* is mainly the temperate and dry regions of the Northern Hemisphere, including Europe, Asia, and North America. They naturally grow in steppes, mountainous regions, and dry grasslands. Many species are cultivated both as wild edible plants and as ornamentals. Various *Allium* species can also be found in nature and gardens in Azerbaijan.

*Allium* plants prefer sunny locations and thrive best in well-drained, dry, or moderately moist soils. Thanks to their bulb-like root systems, they are highly drought tolerant. They usually bloom in late spring and early summer, maintaining their decorative appearance for a long

time. These plants are cold-hardy and survive winter underground in bulb form.



In terms of their impact on people and ecology, Allium species are both useful and aesthetically valuable. Some species, such as onions and garlic, are widely used as food and are beneficial for health. Ornamental varieties create striking forms and color contrasts in gardens and park landscapes. Their flowers strongly attract bees and other pollinating insects. In addition, many species naturally help repel pests.

Their uses include food production, ornamental gardening, and landscape design. Due to their large spherical flower heads, they are often used as “focal plants” in floral compositions. They can also be preserved as dried flowers for decorative purposes. Some wild species are traditionally used in folk cuisine and natural remedies.

Interestingly, the spherical flower shape of Allium is considered one of the rare natural design forms that creates a strong “geometric contrast” in gardens. Their onion scent serves as a natural defense mechanism against pests. Worldwide, Allium is regarded as one of the most important plant groups in both culinary culture and ornamental horticulture.

