

Comparison of Similar Looking Plants

Allium tuberosum and *Allium fistulosum*



Scientific name: *Allium tuberosum*

Common name: Chinese Chives, Garlic Chives,
韭菜 (jiucaì)

Family name: Amaryllidaceae

Origin: Himalaya to China









Scientific name: *Allium fistulosum*



Common name: Scallion, Spring Onion,
葱 (cōng)




Family name: Amaryllidaceae


Origin: China

	<i>Allium tuberosum</i>	<i>Allium fistulosum</i>
Form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perennial herb up to 0.2 - 0.4 m tall • Leaves arranged in a loose, fountain-like clumps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perennial herb up to 0.3 – 1.5 m tall • Leaves form tight, vertical clumps 

	<i>Allium tuberosum</i>	<i>Allium fistulosum</i>
Foliage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flattened leaves taper to a rounded tip, approximately triangular in cross-section • Entire margin, glabrous & parallel venation • Soft, older leaves naturally bend backwards • Crushed leaves have strong, garlic odour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cylindrical, hollow leaves taper to a sharp point, round in cross-section • Entire margin, glabrous & parallel venation • Leaves mostly stand erect • Leaves have onion-like flavour but lack a strong odour when crushed
	 	 

	<i>Allium tuberosum</i>	<i>Allium fistulosum</i>
Stem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matte white stem at the bottom • Distichous leaf arrangement (leaves arranged in 2 columns on either side of the stem) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elongated bulb is continuous with pseudostem • Red, purple or white stem at the bottom • Each stem connected to multiple leaves 

	<i>Allium tuberosum</i>	<i>Allium fistulosum</i>
Flower	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Star-shaped, lightly fragrant flowers (0.6 cm wide) arranged in a globular umbel inflorescence (3-5 cm wide) Flower composed of 6 white tepals (the sepals or outermost layer of the flower look like petals) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flowers (0.6-1 cm long) arranged in a globular umbel inflorescence (3-7 cm wide) White, bell- to urn-shaped flowers with stamens and pistil protruding at the tip Flowering not commonly seen in the tropics  

	<i>Allium tuberosum</i>	<i>Allium fistulosum</i>
Fruit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruit is a green capsule that turns brown and papery when mature • Three-celled fruit splits open to release 1-2 black seeds per cell 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Round fruit (5 mm wide) becomes papery and splits open at maturity • Black seeds are 3-4 mm long and 2-2.5 mm wide

	<i>Allium tuberosum</i>	<i>Allium fistulosum</i>
Ethno-botanical Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaves and young inflorescences used as seasoning • Often added to filling for dumplings or chive boxes (韭菜盒子) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important in Chinese, Japanese and Southeast Asian cuisine for its onion and leek-like flavour • In Chinese traditional medicine, it is used to improve digestion, longevity and internal organ health • In China, plant juice is extracted to repel aphids

References:

- PROSEA Plant Resources of South-East Asia 8: Vegetables
- University of Wisconsin-Madison, Wisconsin Horticulture, Division of Extension website (<https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/articles/garlic-chives-allium-tuberosum/>)
- Missouri Botanical Garden Plant Finder