Onion, Welsh—*Allium fistulosum* L.\(^1\)

James M. Stephens\(^2\)

The Welsh onion is also known as spring onion, *ciboule* (French), *zwiebel* (German), *negi, chibol, sybie, sybow*, and stone leek. “Welsh” is a corruption of the German *walsch*, meaning “foreign,” and has no reference to Wales. The onion originated in Siberia, and is very popular in the East where it is known as Japanese leek. A variety of this is referred to as Japanese bunching onion or nebuka. There is also a perennial Welsh onion (*A. lusitanicum*).

**Description**

The leaves of Welsh onion are round, hollow, and inflated the entire length of 6 to 20 inches. The flower stalk (scape) is also hollow. The plant has only slightly enlarged bulbs, which are very long and are covered with dry membranous, onion-like scales for some distance aboveground. The color of the bulbs ranges from white to pink. The black, angular seeds are similar to common onion seeds.

**Culture**

Welsh onion is frost hardy but will not withstand a severe freeze. Varieties that are adapted to northern areas lose their leaves during the winter months. While the Welsh onion is not a popular Florida vegetable garden item, it appears likely that it would grow and produce well in all areas of the state.

**Use**

The entire plant may be pulled and eaten like a green onion as early as when 3–4 inches high, or leaf portions may be snipped off as needed for flavoring. If pulled as a green onion, 4 to 5 months are required from seeding to harvesting.