

# SPOTLIGHT

## LAMBSQUARTERS



Young lambsquarters (*Chenopodium album*) on sidewalk of South 23rd Street, Center City.

In 1818 an account of plants growing wild in Philadelphia described lambsquarters (*Chenopodium album*): “This weed in its young state is eaten at our tables. It attains the height of five or six feet. In wastes, in dunghills, near rubbish, and in gardens, everywhere very common.”<sup>1</sup>

Ten years later a report concluded that importation of agricultural seed contaminated with seed from *C. album* had introduced this plant into the United States from Europe.<sup>2</sup>

Lambsquarters’ association with people is ancient. In northern Syria archeological excavation found seeds of *C. album* with artifacts of human habitation dating back 10,000 years.<sup>3</sup> In Jutland, Denmark, seeds of *C. album* were recovered from the gut of Grauballe Man, whose corpse was found submerged in a state of partial preservation in a peat bog approximately 2,400 years after his death.<sup>4</sup> In Alberta, Canada, prehistoric Native Americans harvested seeds of this species.<sup>5</sup>