

Description

Rocket Salad
Eruca Sativa
Family: Brassicaceae

Rocket Salad is an annual salad herb that grows up to 35cm high. It has dark green lobed leaves that increase in width towards their tip and then round off at a length of about 10-15cm around the base of the plant and are smaller along the stem. They have a pungent, mustardy, peppery taste. The flower displays four pale yellow petals with purple veins emerging from a slender 1cm purple/green calyx, appearing in regular spaces along the tip of the stem. The seeds develop in long seed pods and turn black when ripe.

Growing Tips

It tolerates sun but prefers shade. For leaf tenderness and pleasant flavour provide good compost on well-drained soil. For best results plant at 20cm intervals throughout summer.

Parts Used

Leaves

Uses

The mustardy, zesty taste of the Rocket Salad's fresh leaves makes a great addition to salads, sandwiches and pizzas, and is part of the filling in the Turkish specialty pie called burek, together with cheese. They are an excellent source of vitamin C and potassium. The seeds are used in India and are called Gargeer, and is made into Taramiro oil and thus used in cooking and preserving. As a herb it has an uplifting effect.

Origin & History

In its original region - Southern France and Italy - this herb has been used since Roman times and was considered an aphrodisiac.

It was widely used in Elizabethan times in England, where it was eaten before a whipping and to avoid bites from rodents and snakes. Seeds were used 'to enliven dour people'.

Marco Polo sourced the plant in North-Western China and it found its way to Europe around the 14th century then the U.S. in 1820.

