PLANT FACT SHEET

Tropaeolum majus L.

GENUS *Tropaeolum* **FAMILY** Tropaeolaceae

COMMON NAMES Nasturtium, Indian cress

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Seeds, Herb, Flowers, Spice, Vegetable, Fruit

The leaves, flower petals and seeds are all edible and have a hot peppery taste.
The leaves and flowers are eaten raw. They are used in salads, sandwiches, vegetable dishes and are stuffed like grape leaves. The flowers can be added to vinegars.
The flower buds and young fruit are used as a substitute for capers in sauce.
The mature seeds can be eaten roasted. They can be used as a pepper substitute.

DESCRIPTION

A creeping climbing annual herb. It grows to 60-300 cm high and can spread to several m wide with long branches. The leaves are small and round. They are light green. Leaves are 2.5-6 cm across. The edges of the leaves are wavy. The veins radiate out from the centre. It has trumpet like flowers. The flowers are orange and yellow and have a pointy piece at the back of the flower. Several ornamental varieties have been bred by hybridisation.

HABITAT

It is a subtropical plant. It prefers a sunny position. It is mainly seen between 600 and 1800 m altitude in Papua New Guinea. It is damaged by frost. It can tolerate drought. They need a temperature above 3°C. In Argentina it grows below 800 m above sea level. It can grow in arid places. It suits hardiness zones 9-11. In Sichuan and Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. Plants reseed easily. Seed should be soaked overnight before sowing. Seed are sown 6-12 mm deep. Plants should be spaced 15-30 cm apart.

NOTES

There are 80 to 90 Tropaeolum species. It has anticancer properties.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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