PLANT FACT SHEET

Pastinaca sativa L.

GENUS *Pastinaca* **FAMILY** Apiaceae

COMMON NAMES Parsnip

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Root, Leaves, Seeds, Spice, Vegetable

The root is cooked and eaten. It can be boiled, baked, fried or used in stews.
The root of wild parsnip is normally washed, peeled, cooked in salt water then strained and added to soups.
The roots are also made into marmalade, syrup, beer and wine.
The young shoots and leaves are added to soups or cooked and eaten as a vegetable.
The seeds can be used as a spice.

DESCRIPTION

A herb with long thickened tap root. The stems are angular and have grooves along them. The leaves are divided. The ones near the base have 5-11 lobes. These are oval and have teeth along the edge. The thickened root is yellowish white. The taproot can be 3 m long.
Wild parsnip grows in some temperate places. It has a very strong parsnip smell. It can be used as food.

HABITAT

It is a temperate plant. It grows in the highlands in the tropics from 1700-2600 m altitude. It is frost resistant. In Argentina it grows between 500-1,500 m above sea level. In Papua New Guinea it grows between 1,160-2,790 m above sea level. It suits hardiness zones 4-8.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seeds.

Harvesting and Seed Production

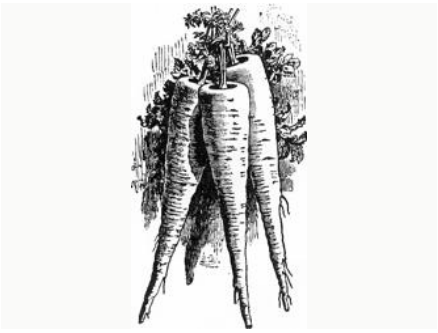
Plants are slow growing. The taste is best after the first frosts.

NOTES

There are 14 Pastinaca species. Parsnips contain psoralens which has been linked with some cancers.

PICTURES

Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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French, B.R. & Maynard, A.R. Food Plants International Database. Food Plants International

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