

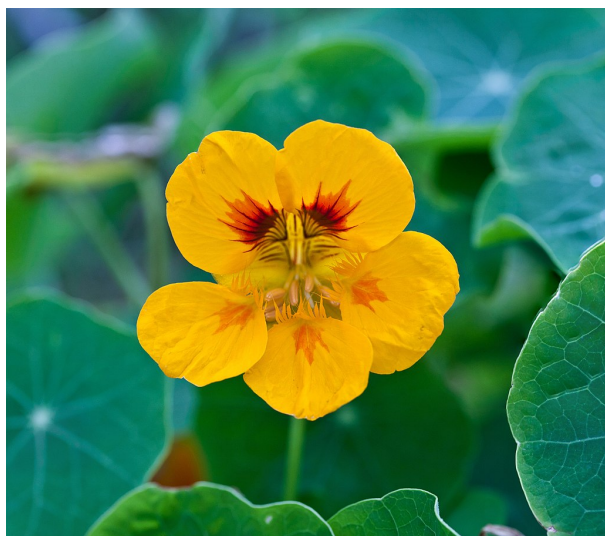


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Nasturtium or Great Nasturtium, *Tropaeolum majus* L.

Native to the Americas, nasturtium is an annual plant that tends to wrap around objects. Single or double, its flowers are edible. Mainly an annual flower, the nasturtium was born in the Andes Mountains, between Bolivia and Peru. It is called "Indian cress" because it has a slightly peppery taste. The Quechua people also cultivated it for its medicinal properties.



Botanical description

It is a fast-growing plant, with trailing stems growing to 1-2 m. The leaves are large, nearly circular, 3 to 15 cm in diameter, green to glaucous green above, paler below. The flowers are 2,5–6 cm diameter, with five petals, eight stamens, and a 2,5–3 cm long nectar spur at the rear; they vary from yellow to orange to red, frilled and often darker at the base of the petals.

Method of cultivation

Tropaeolum majus cultivars are widely grown as easy annual plants, for poor, damp soil in full sun. The large seeds are easy to handle individually. As they are fast-growing, they may be sown in situ in May or June. Many flower colours are available, in the warm spectrum from cream through yellow, orange, red and maroon.

Medicinal uses

This flower is known for its antibacterial, anti-inflammatory, expectorant, antiseptic and therapeutic effects, as it contains flavonoids, glucosinolate, oxalic acid, myrosine and vitamin C. To feel its benefits, it is recommended to drink at least one cup of boiled water daily in which dried nasturtium leaves and flowers will have macerated. Nasturtium also has beneficial properties for the scalp, especially against dandruff. A well-known brand offers an anti-dandruff shampoo made from nasturtium. Recipes for hair lotions made with nasturtium can easily be found on the Internet.

Culinary uses

Nasturtium is known to enhance the taste of salads and every part of the flower can be used in the kitchen. **The mustard-tasting leaves** are great in salads or soups and can also replace lettuce leaves in a sandwich. **The fresh seeds** and **pickled flower buds** are an excellent substitute for capers. **The petals**, reminiscent of the pungent taste of watercress and radish, enhance salads and desserts, and flavour

cheeses, butters and vinegars. **Be careful**, however, to place the flowers in your salad or soup at the last minute, otherwise the dressing will cook them and they will lose their decorative and taste qualities.

Fried Nasturtium Leaves

Ingredients

- Freshly picked and untreated nasturtium leaves
- Sunflower oil or other cooking resistant oil

Preparation

1. Remove the nasturtium leaves and cut off the stem.
2. Heat a little oil in a pan
3. Place the leaves flat in the stainless steel pan, without overlapping. Cook them on one side for a few minutes. The leaves will shrink and become much smaller as they cook.



4. Gently turn the leaves over and cook on the other side for a few more minutes.
5. Be careful not to overcook to keep the nasturtium leaves green.
6. Once cooked, carefully place the leaves on paper towels.
7. Repeat the operation until all the leaves are used up.



History and popularity of the nasturtium



Roses and nasturtiums in a vase
Henri Fantin-Latour 1883

The great nasturtium was introduced by Dutch conquistadors around 1680 in Europe where it appeared in monastery gardens and was held in high esteem as an aromatic and medicinal plant. The spur of the nasturtium flower is reminiscent of the hood of a monk's habit, which may suggest that its French name is derived from that of the Capuchin monks.

It is said that, in Europe, the nasturtium made its debut at the court of King Louis XIV, *le Roi soleil*, who offered bouquets of nasturtiums to his favorite, Madame de Maintenon.

The information contained in this sheet is, in part, taken and adapted from the following sites:

https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grande_capucine https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tropaeolum_majus
<https://123degustez.fr/recettes/recettes-salees/feuilles-de-capucine-frites/>

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