Nasturtium 'Alaska' seeds

Tropaeolum majus



Height: 30 cm

Spread: up to 60 cm

Suitable for: Containers, ground cover on poor dry soil. Sun or a little shade.

Summary: Nasturtiums are easy to grow annuals with edible flowers and leaves. Alaska is an heirloom variety with variegated leaves which are green, white and cream in irregular blotches. The flowers are trumpets of vibrant red, orange, yellow and cream. The plant is bushy and spreading rather than climbing.

More information:

These herbs with their bright foliage and vibrant flowers are great for containers, summer bedding and ground cover. They grow extremely well in poor dry soils where many other plants would fail to thrive. Rich soil, lots of watering and fertiliser increases the foliage growth at expense of the flowers.

The foliage of Nasturtium Alaska is semi-succulent and peppery tasting with very attractive markings which makes it attractive even before it starts to flower. The flowers are produced from early to mid-summer, depending on the time of seed sowing, and are in a whole range of colours from dark mahogany through reds and oranges to cream.

Both the leaves and flowers are used fresh in a variety of dishes. Their flavour is spicy, a bit like watercress — indeed the latin name for watercress is Nasturtium officinale.

- The leaves can be added to any type of green salad, much as you might use rocket, or chopped and used to garnish vegetable soups.
- The larger leaves can be used like vine leaves, either raw stuffed with a mayonnaise based tuna or chicken filling, or stuffed and baked with a Greek / Turkish filling of rice, nuts, currants and spices.
- Add shredded leaves with other oriental greens to your stir-fries.
- When mixed with chopped chives, both the leaves and flowers make a delightful addition to potato salad.
- Finely chop the leaves in a food processor with chilli, salt and garlic then add olive oil to make a paste. This makes a nasturtium 'pesto' — great in stirfries or added at the end of cooking to dhall and vegetable curry — one to experiment with once you have some in the fridge — we like to it spread directly onto crostini and garnish with a nasturtium flower!

The blossoms are totally edible and really attractive as well. They can be used as an appetising garnish to many salads, plates of canapés, drinks — in fact any dish which is not steaming hot as the heat will cause the flowers to wilt immediately.

Stuffed nasturtium flowers make pretty little appetisers to serve with drinks. Choose large flowers if possible, in a mixture of colours. Check for insects hiding inside and then stuff ¾ full with a herby cream cheese mix, or a thickish dip like guacamole. Wrap the petals around the top of the stuffing and serve on thick slices of cucumber or small round crackers.