# Salad Rocket seeds (Arugula)

***Eruca sativa 'Victoria'***



**Height:** Up to 20c m, 45 cm when in flower

**Suitable for:** Most soils, in a sunny position.

**Summary:** Salad Rocket is a hardy annual herb with a dark green peppery leaf which is grown mainly for salad use. It is fast growing in most soils but does tend to go to seed easily in hot weather, so sow little and often.

**More information:**

Salad rocket is a very hardy annual. Early crops can be sown in containers under cover as early as late February. It is prolific and germinates rapidly so sow thinly and in succession every 3 or 4 weeks for a continuous crop.

Outside it grows readily in most soils as long as they are not too wet and waterlogged. Keep the soil moist especially in hot weather as this will slow down the tendency to go to seed.

September sowings will provide salad leaves well into the winter, either grown under cover or outside with cloche or fleece protection.

Salad rocket is generally problem free to grow, in summer the leaves maybe speckled with small holes caused by flea beetle. These are harmless and do not affect the leaf or taste. If, like us, you prefer not to spray your crop then they are to be expected especially in rural areas.

Harvest a few leaves from each plant for the kitchen, picking lots of leaves from just 1 or 2 plants will weaken them. Pinch out the flower buds as they start to form but it is inevitable that the rocket will go to seed in hot weather. The plants will self-seed so you may want to leave a few plants for this purpose, also the creamy flowers make a pretty, peppery addition to your salads.

The leaves have a sweet nutty flavour when young and develop a hotter spicy flavour as they mature. They are rich in iron and copper, vitamins A and C and antioxidants so make a healthy addition to any meal.

- Add the leaves to salads in many variations.
- A bed of leaves makes a good base to serve grilled chicken or fish.
- Wilt the leaves onto pizzas after cooking and stir through pasta before serving.
- They make a delicious pesto replacing basil in the recipe.
- They combine particularly well with nuts, cheeses such as mozzarella and parmesan and avocado.

In West Asia salad rocket is grown for its seed which is pressed and the oil extracted for use in food preservation and pickles.