Nasturtium 'Blue Pepe' seeds (Salad nasturtium)

Tropaeolum majus



Height: Up to 30cm

Suitable for: Sun or part shade, in average to poor soil. Excellent in containers.

Summary: This is a unique nasturtium, which has been bred especially as a culinary variety mainly for restaurant use. The leaves are small and round with a steel blue colour and purple beneath. The flowers in summer are an intense dark red.

More information:

Nasturtiums are fast and easy to grow. They thrive in well drained soil in full sun. No extra fertiliser is needed otherwise the plants will produce lots of foliage at the expense of the flowers. All parts of the plant are edible. The flowers are both sweet and spicy and make a fabulous edible garnish. The foliage has an aromatic peppery flavour and is great in salads.

These herbs with their vivid flowers and contrasting foliage 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 this nasturtium is a little smaller than common nasturtiums. It is semi-succulent and peppery tasting, with a steel blue colour and purple undersides 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 a bright red with a velvety texture. The flowers maybe picked as a cut flower and will last well for several days in water.

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.
- 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 stir-fries 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.

Stuffed nasturtium flowers make pretty little appetisers to serve with drinks.

Choose large flowers if possible.

Check for insects hiding inside and then stuff 3/4 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.