



ANOTHER HERB HERBERT FACT SHEET



SPECIAL INTEREST HERBS GOURMET VEGETABLES BOK CHOI & PAK CHOI

Brassica chinensis



DESCRIPTION

Cantonese annual upright plant with attractive dark green fleshy leaves and longer, slimmer stalks than Pak Choi. It is a tender variety and has an exceptionally mild flavor. Height 3ft. (1m) Width 12-18in (30-45cm)



GROWTH

Fast growing annual, does well in a hot, wet summer climate. Has been grown in China since the 5th, Century AD. Can reach maturity in as little as 45 days.



CULTIVATION

Requires soil with lots of organic material in full sun. They do best in warm temperatures however this plant has some tolerance to frosts. Best sown in spring and autumn/fall in cool regions, so they are growing and can be cropped in late summer when daytime max. are 15-20 C.



PROPERTIES

A small plant with upright thickened and flattened leaves, white petioles and smooth, rounded blades. High in Vitamin C, potassium and dietary fibre.



USES

Culinary

Use in stir-fry dishes or as a garnish in Asian salads. Young leaves and stems are eaten fresh in salads but they are also cooked in a wide range of dishes. Usually chopped before being cooked, but small specimens may be cooked whole and added to stir fries, just before serving. The flower shoots may also be eaten if the plants bolt prematurely, or have been left to flower. To retain the highest flavor, do not overcook. Steaming is recommended. This plant has been used for centuries in Asia but western cooking is just discovering this little gem.



Long summer days and high temperature may cause the leaves to become tough. This variety is shallow-rooted so it needs to be watered regularly during dry weather, and prefers a soil pH of 6.5-7pH. Transplanted seedlings still sometimes bolt to seed, so it is better to sow seed directly into the ground at a depth of 1cm. Germination takes about seven days and optimum soil temperatures for germination are around 18 C. Thin plants to about 25cm/10" apart in each direction, and use the thinning in salads, and stir-fries. Plants are often harvested quite young, starting when they are only 15cm/6" tall with about eight leaves.



Any enquiries can be directed to:

HERB HERBERT P/L PO Box 24 Monbulk Victoria 3793 Australia

E-mail: herb@herbherbert.com

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