

ANOTHER  
HERB HERBERT  
FACT SHEET

RHUBARB SPECIAL INTEREST HERBS  
GOURMET VEGETABLES  
Rhubarb  
*Rheum raphonticum*



**DESCRIPTION**

Rhubarb is that tart stringy vegetable that is usually only ever served stewed or in a pie. It's often mixed with sweeter fruits or lemon to balance out its sharp taste. But rather than over looking it as an old fashioned favorite, how about considering it as a beautiful landscape plant, as well as a classic dessert food. It's frost hardy and thrives when left to its own devices. This is the perfect vegetable for the fair-weather gardener who is constantly busy. The rhubarb vegetable has lush, deep green heart shaped leaves which strikingly contrast its rich red stems. It's packed with vitamin C and is a more than adequate source of dietary fibre. The only part of the Rhubarb plant that you can eat is the stem. The leaves can grow up to a 1ft/30cm in length and whole plant will grow several feet /60cm high. Do not eat the leaves. **Red Legs** are a newly selected improved red stemmed variety.

leaves are no good to eat and can cause illness, so it's important to remember not to eat them or include them in any cooking. If eaten the leaves will cause breathing difficulties in most people and are considered toxic. The deep red stems are the only part of the plant that is edible. Rhubarb also has a strong laxative effect.



**GROWTH**

In warm areas rhubarb will grow all year round. If you live in colder climates, you can encourage growth by placing a bucket or protective covering over small seedlings until they establish a root system, but this plant is frost hardy. You can also plant rhubarb in a planter or pot as long as there is enough room for them to grow a full 91-122cm/ 3-4ft tall.



**CULTIVATION**

The rhubarb is a slow growing vegetable and will take a full 18 months from sowing to harvest. If you buy your rhubarb as a seedling, rather than as a seed you will see stalks within 6 months. The rhubarb plant can last up to 10 years in the same position so consider this when planting. Depending on the variety the color of the stalks can vary from green to deep red. Some species even produce a speckled pink stem, however the most popularly grown variety has the deep red stem. The color of the stem has no bearing on flavor or cooking. they won't ripen off the vine. Once harvested, it can keep for several weeks in the refrigerator.



**USES**

Rhubarb is used most widely in desserts including pies, cakes and muffins, sauces and jams, jellies and even juice. It has a unique flavor that if it's cooked properly, and accompanied with the right ingredients, is delightful. The

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