

Mustard plant

For the prepared condiment, see Mustard (condiment). For other uses of the term "mustard", see Mustard (disambiguation).

Mustard plant are any of several plant species in the genera *Brassica* and *Sinapis*. Mustard seed is used as a spice. Grinding and mixing the seeds with water, vinegar or other liquids, creates the yellow condiment known as mustard. The seeds can also be pressed to make mustard oil, and the edible leaves can be eaten as mustard greens.

History

Although some varieties of mustard plants were well-established crops in Hellenistic and Roman times, Zohary and Hopf note: "There are almost no archeological records available for any of these crops." Wild forms of mustard and its relatives the radish and turnip can be found over west Asia and Europe, suggesting their domestication took place somewhere in that area. However, Zohary and Hopf conclude: "Suggestions as to the origins of these plants are necessarily based on linguistic considerations."



Mustard Flowers in a field in Punjab

Varieties

Mild white mustard (*Sinapis hirta*) grows wild in North Africa, the Middle East and Mediterranean Europe, and has spread farther by long cultivation; oriental mustard (*Brassica juncea*), originally from the foothills of the Himalaya, is grown commercially in India, Canada, the UK, Denmark and the US; black mustard (*Brassica nigra*) is grown in Argentina, Chile, the US and some European countries. Canada and Nepal are the world's major producers of mustard seed, between them accounting for around 57% of world production in 2010.

There has been recent research into varieties of mustards that have a high oil content for use in the production of biodiesel, a renewable liquid fuel similar to diesel fuel. The biodiesel made from mustard oil has good cold flow properties and cetane ratings. The leftover meal after pressing out the oil has also been found to be an effective pesticide.

An interesting genetic relationship between many species of mustard has been observed, and is described as the Triangle of U.

Gallery



References

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