

Samphire

For other uses, see Samphire (disambiguation).

Samphire is a name given to a number of succulent

- *Sarcocornia*, cosmopolitan.



Norfolk Samphire (*Salicornia europaea*)

halophytes that tend to be associated with water bodies.

- Rock samphire, *Crithmum maritimum* is a coastal species with white flowers that grows in the United Kingdom. This is probably the species mentioned by Shakespeare in *King Lear*.
- Golden samphire, *Limbarda crithmoides* is a coastal species with yellow flowers that grows across Eurasia.
- Several species in the genus *Salicornia*.
- *Blutaparon vermiculare*, Central America, south-eastern North America
- *Tecticornia*, Australian.

1 Etymology

Originally “sampire”, a corruption of the French “Saint Pierre” (Saint Peter),^[1] samphire was named after the patron saint of fishermen because all of the original plants with its name grow in rocky salt-sprayed regions along the sea coast of northern Europe or in its coastal marsh areas. It is sometimes called sea asparagus or sea pickle. In Norfolk it is commonly called sampha [sam-fa]. In North Wales, especially along the River Dee’s marshes, it has always been known as sampkin.

2 Uses



Fresh samphire from the Loughor estuary for sale at Swansea Market

Marsh samphire ashes were used to make soap and glass (hence its other old English name, “glasswort”).^[1] In the 14th century glassmakers located their workshops near regions where this plant grew, since it was so closely

linked to their trade. Many samphires are edible. In England the leaves were gathered early in the year and pickled or eaten in salads with oil and vinegar. It is mentioned by Shakespeare in King Lear:

Half-way down Hangs one that gathers samphire; dreadful trade! (Act IV, Scene VI). This refers to the dangers involved in collecting rock samphire on sea cliffs.

Marsh samphire (*Salicornia bigelovii*) was investigated as a potential biodiesel source that can be grown in coastal areas where conventional crops cannot be grown.^[2]

3 References

- [1] "Samphire; A Mermaid's Kiss". *Our Norfolk*. 6 July 2014. Retrieved 12 August 2014.
- [2] Clark, Arthur (November–December 1994). "Samphire: From Sea to Shining Seed" (PDF). *Saudi Aramco World*. Saudi Aramco. Archived from the original (PDF) on July 26, 2011. Retrieved 2008-11-17.

4 External links

- [Buying and cooking samphire](#)

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5.1 Text

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