

Home Gardening Series

Garden Cress

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Vegetables

Environment

Light – sunny
Soil – loam
Fertility – light to medium
pH – 6.0 to 7.5
Temperature – cool season
Moisture – moist

Culture

Planting – seed shallow depth after
danger of frost
Spacing – 1 to 2 inches
Hardiness – cool-season annual
Fertilizer – medium

Garden Cress – *Lepidium sativum*

Garden cress originated in Persia and later spread to the gardens of India, Syria, Greece and Egypt. Garden cress is a hardy, cool-season salad green that is a member of the mustard/turnip family. It is also called peppergrass.

Cultural Practices

Sow 10 to 15 seeds per foot of row and cover 1/4 to 1/2 inch deep. Plant garden cress at two-week intervals as soon as the ground can be worked in the spring. Garden cress is not usually thinned.



Plant seeds of winter cress in late summer at the same time you plant spinach. Thin seedlings of winter cress to 2 to 3 inches apart in the row.



The cresses require relatively moist soil and cool growing conditions. They can be grown in protected cold frames during the winter months. Pick the leaves when 3 to 5 inches long, or cut the entire plant at any size before seedstalks form.

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Cultivars

Crop	Cultivar	Days to Maturity	Seed Per 100 Feet of Row	Remarks
Garden Cress	Broad Leaved	10-40	1/8 ounce	Oval leaves, good for use in soups.
	Curled Cressida	10-30	1/8 ounce	Divisions of the leaves are finer and ornamental in appearance. Used as a garnish for salads. Also known as peppergrass.
	Water Cress <i>Nastur officinale</i>	60	1/8 ounce	Leaves and shoots are used as a garnish. Can also sprout seeds like alfalfa.
	Upland Cress <i>Barbarea na</i>	50	1/8 ounce	Dryland equivalent of water cress, easy to grow. Also known as "Creasy Greens."

Photo Credit: Robert H. Mohlenbrock @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database/USDA NRCS. 1995. *Northeast Wetland Flora: Field Office Guide to Plant Species*. Northeast National Technical Center, Chester.

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