

Common Name: **Horseradish**

Genus: *Armoracia*

Species: *rusticana*

Family: Brassicaceae

AKA: Mountain Radish, Great Raifort, Red Cole, Moutarde (Mustard) des Allemands, Redcole



## Historical Uses:

### Medical:

“When it is eaten then, it is good for healthy and strong people since it strengthens the greenness of their good humors. After it grows hard and when its rind is tough, it is dangerous to eat because it does not have any greenness. It makes a person dry, just as if the person had eaten wood. Therefore, do not let them eat it, but nevertheless, let them suck out its juice and spit the rest from his or her mouth.” (1)

“Oximel or syrupe made with vinegar and honie, in which the rindes of Horse radish have bene infused three days, causeth vomit, and is commended against the quartaine ague. The leaves boiled in wine, and a little oile olive added thereto and laid upon the grieved parts in manner of a Pultis, doe mollifie and take away the hard swellings of the liver and milte, and being applied to the bottome of the belly is a remedie for the strangurie. It mittigateth and asswageth the paine of the hip or haunch, commonly called Sciatica. It profiteth much against the collicke, strangurie, and difficultie of making water, used instead of mustard as aforesaid. The root stamped and given to drinke, killeth the wormes in children: the juice given doth the same: an ointment made thereof doth the like, being anointed upon the belly of the child.” (2)\*



“Horseradish (merrich) is warm. In March when all herbs get green, horseradish is soft, but for a short time. When it is eaten then, it is good for healthy and strong people since it strengthens the greenness of their humors. After it grows hard and when it’s rind is tough, it is dangerous to eat because it does not have any greenness. When horseradish is green, let it dry in the sun. Add an equal amount of galingale powder to the dried horseradish. Let whoever suffers pain in his or her heart eat this powder, eating or



Close-up of flowers

fasting, with bread. But let whoever suffers pain in the lungs drink this powder either in warm wine or in warm water, eating or fasting; the person will be cured.” (3)

“The juice of the horse-radish given to drink is held to be very effectual for the scurvy. It is heating, drying, aperitive, frequently used in sauces to create an appetite; it is of great use against the scurvy, dropsy, and jaundice, and is often put into diet-drinks for those purposes.” (4)

**Culinary:**

“The Horse Radish stamped with a little vinegar put thereto, is commonly used among the Germanes for sauce to eat fish with, and such like meates as we do mustarde, but this kinde of sauce doth heate the stomacke better, and causeth better digestion than mustard.” (5)

**Folklore/Astrology:** Under the domain of Mars. (6) “Hot and drie in the third degree: they have a drying and clensing quality, and somewhat digesting.” (7)

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**Contemporary Uses:**

**Parts Used:** Leaves, roots.

**Medicinal:** Stimulant, aperient, rubefacient, diuretic and antiseptic. It is a powerful stimulant, whether applied internally or externally as a rubefacient, and has aperient and antiseptic properties. Taken with oily fish or rich meat, either by itself or steeped in vinegar, or in a plain sauce, it acts as an excellent stimulant to the digestive organs, and as a spur to complete digestion. It is a very strong diuretic, and was employed by old herbalists in calculus and like affections. It is useful in the treatment of dropsy.

Boerhaave recommended it to be given in scurvy when there was not much fever, and administered it for various other complaints. When infused in wine, Horseradish root will stimulate the whole nervous system and promote perspiration. (8)

Internally for general debility, arthritis, gout, sciatica, respiratory, and urinary infections, and fevers characterized by coldness. Excess causes vomiting and may provoke allergic responses. Not given to patients with stomach ulcers or thyroid problems. Externally as a poultice for infected wounds, pleurisy, arthritis, and pericarditis. (9)

**Culinary:** Young, fresh leaves have a mild pleasant flavor, and are excellent in salads and sandwiches. Fresh root is grated alone, or with apple, as a condiment for fish, or with vinegar and cream to accompany roast beef, cold chicken, or hard-boiled eggs. In eaten Europe, horseradish is often mixed with beets as a condiment. Horseradish sauces

may be gently warmed, but cooking destroys the volatile oils responsible for the pungency. (10)

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**Area of Origin:** Native to Southeast Europe,

**Physical description:** Tall tap-rooted perennial.

**Plant type:** Perennial

**Form:** Upright

**Height:** 1 to 4ft

**Flower color:** Tiny white flowers.

**Flowering period:** Early summer.

**Soil type/requirements:** Well-drained, rich soil.

**Hardiness zone:** USDA zone 3-10

**Sun requirements:** Sun or partial shade

**Propagation:** By division in autumn or early spring; by seed sown *in situ* in spring and thinned to 12in apart. (11)

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### **Sources**

1. Hildegard, 113
2. Gerard, pg. 241, Listed as *Raphanus rusticanus* in The Herbal
3. Von Bingen, pg. 112-113
4. Culpeper, pg. 130
5. Gerard, pg. 241
6. Culpeper, pg. 130
7. Gerard, pg. 242
8. Grieve, pg. 419
9. Bown, pg. 130
10. Ibid
11. Bown, 129-130 Anderson, pg.

### **Illustrations/Images:**

1. Fuch's Herbal                      1543
2. PSUMG                                2013