



DET NORSKE
HAGESELSKAP

Exotic Vegetables, Spices and Herbs

Definition

Exotic crops are plants or plant parts that are introduced in Norway, and which are not common in domestic crop production or in the traditional Norwegian cuisine.



Examples

- **Potato:** was an exotic crop 250 years ago, became a common food crop, now on the decline
- **Garlic and maize (corn):** an exotic food 20-40 years ago, now more common as a crop as well
- **Edible chrysanthemum and mizuna mustard:** exotic both as crop and food



Okra

- ❖ *Abelmoschus esculentus*
- ❖ Norwegian: okra
- ❖ Other names: gumbo, bhindi, lady's fingers

- ❖ Ethiopia and most tropical and subtropical areas
- ❖ Edible seed pods, oblong, six-sided fruit, 5-12 cm long
- ❖ Annual plant, can be grown outdoors, in a hotbed or greenhouse. Outdoors, okra needs a warm, protected location.
- ❖ Germinates after 10-20 days at 20 °C, grows to a height of about 40 cm. Sow 1-2 seeds in 9 cm pots indoors, and transplant.
- ❖ Fruits harvested when immature, mild taste, used like beans or sugar peas, as a vegetable in stews or as a side with meat dishes.



Garlic



- ❖ *Allium sativum*
- ❖ Norwegian: hvitløk
- ❖ Central Asia, grown in most parts of the world
- ❖ Bulb usually composed of several smaller cloves
- ❖ Juicy, white, very strong taste and odor
- ❖ Cloves are planted with the pointed end facing up about 4 weeks before the soil freezes in autumn. Spacing: 10-15 cm between plants, 20-30 cm between rows.
- ❖ Used to spice and enhance the taste of meat and pasta dishes, pizza, soups and sauces; as garlic butter, garlic mayonnaise, etc.

Garlic chives

- ❖ *Allium tuberosum*
- ❖ Norwegian: kinagressløk, kinesisk gressløk
- ❖ Other names: Oriental garlic, Chinese chives

- ❖ Japan, China, India and Nepal
- ❖ Perennial, similar to domestic chives
- ❖ Sow 3-4 seeds per cm, thin to a spacing of 20 cm, row spacing: 30 cm.
- ❖ Bulbs, seeds and flowers are edible. Mild garlic flavor, can be used in the same way as chives, spring onions or garlic. Used in fried fish and meat dishes.



Amaranth

- ❖ *Amaranthus* spp.
- ❖ Norwegian: amaranth
- ❖ Other names: Chinese spinach

- ❖ South America
- ❖ Ornamental with colorful seed heads and foliage
- ❖ Sow outdoors, spacing: 50 cm, rich soil, likes sun and warmth
- ❖ The leaves are harvested and can be used raw in salads or cooked like spinach



Malabar spinach

- ❖ *Basella alba*
- ❖ Norwegian: malabarspinat, basella
- ❖ Other names: Indian spinach

- ❖ India, China; Europe since early 1900s (as indoor plant)
- ❖ Leaves, leaf stalks and stems have a mild spinach flavor
- ❖ Start from seeds indoors at 16-18 °C, transplant to a sunny location when the soil is warm. Can also be grown in pots of at least 25 cm diameter.
- ❖ Can be used instead of normal spinach, raw in salads, cooked, or stir-fried
- ❖ Fresh leaves can be used as a sandwich topping



Chard



- ❖ *Beta vulgaris var. cicla*
- ❖ Norwegian: mangold, sølvbete, bladbete
- ❖ Other names: Swiss chard, spinach beet, mangold

- ❖ Biennial plant, genus *Atriplex*, leaf vegetable
- ❖ Mediterranean, otherwise worldwide, also in Arabian cuisine
- ❖ Sow outdoors, spacing: 20-30 cm between plants, 40-50 cm between rows
- ❖ Young leaves used in salads; larger, older leaves can be stir-fried or cooked

Mizuna mustard

- ❖ *Brassica rapa* var. *Nipposinica*,
B.r. var. *Japonica*
- ❖ Norwegian: mizunakål, mizunasalat, kyona
- ❖ China, Japan
- ❖ Decorative, glossy, serrated, dark green leaves and narrow white stalks
- ❖ Sow outdoors in warm soil at 1-2 cm depth. Spacing: 20-30 cm between plants, 30-50 cm between rows.
- ❖ Raw in salads, older, larger leaves in soups, stews, pasta and wok dishes, as a boiled vegetable. Piquant, mild peppery flavor.



Pak choi

- ❖ *Brassica rapa ssp. chinensis*
- ❖ Norwegian: stilkål, pak choi
- ❖ Other names: bok choi

- ❖ Spread from China via Korea to Japan, now worldwide.
- ❖ Sow outdoors, 3 cm deep, spacing: 15-50 cm between plants, 20-30 cm between rows. Likes full sun, but tolerates some shade. Grows to about 30 cm height, harvest about 6 weeks after seeding. Easy to grow, prefers cool growing conditions and is slightly frost-hardy.
- ❖ Fresh, crispy pak choi leaves and stems can be used in salads, but can also be cooked, stir-fried, or steamed in butter.



Mustard greens



- ❖ *Brassica juncea*
- ❖ Norwegian: Indisk bladsennep
- ❖ Other names: Indian mustard, Chinese mustard, leaf mustard

- ❖ Central Asia, Himalayas, Caucasia, India, China and Southeast Asia
- ❖ Leaf vegetable with mustard flavor, some with a more peppery flavor
- ❖ Sow outdoors, spacing: 20-30 cm between plants, 30-50 cm between rows. Can tolerate frosts to -10 °C in autumn, and continues to grow. Early sowing and sowing in cold soil can easily cause bolting.
- ❖ The leaves are used in salads, soups, meat dishes and stews.

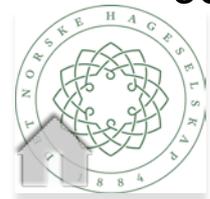


Chili pepper



- ❖ *Capsicum* spp.
- ❖ Norwegian: chili
- ❖ Other names: chili, hot pepper

- ❖ South America, grown in Asia, Africa and parts of Europe
- ❖ Green, red, yellow, orange and other colors; varying degrees of spiciness. Used as a spice either fresh, dried or smoked
- ❖ Start from seeds indoors in January-March, transplant seedlings to rich, well-drained soil, protected, sunny and warm location or in greenhouse. Can also be grown in pots in a protected corner of a balcony. For field cultivation, cover plants with fleece in spring and autumn.
- ❖ Spacing between plants and rows: 40 cm. Plant height varies from 60-120 cm, depending on variety.



Edible chrysanthemum

- ❖ *Chrysanthemum coronarium*
- ❖ Norsk: Shungiku, tong hu, spiselig krysantemum
- ❖ Engelsk: Edible chrysanthemum, Chop-suey-green, Crown daisy, Japanese-green
- ❖ Ettårig plante, Middelhavet, Kina, Japan og Sørøst-Asia
- ❖ Blomsten enkel, vanligvis gul, bladene typisk, kraftig aromatisk smak
- ❖ Så direkte på friland utover i vekstsesongen, planteavstand 5-15 cm, radavstand 30 cm
- ❖ Blader og unge skudd spises rå, lett kokt eller stekt som egen rett eller i supper og gryteretter, hovedingrediens i chop suey



Coriander



- ❖ *Coriandrum sativum*
- ❖ Norwegian: koriander
- ❖ Other names: cilantro (coriander leaves)

- ❖ Has been grown in India, China and Egypt for 3000 years; also common in the Caribbean
- ❖ Leaves (fresh, aka cilantro), seeds (dried): have different uses
- ❖ Coriander is easy to grow, sow outdoors in May
- ❖ Crushed seeds go well with rice dishes, chutneys, stews, salads, chicken, sauces, fish, vegetables, soups, salsa, guacamole and crackers. The leaves are used in salads, vegetables and poultry dishes.

Zucchini



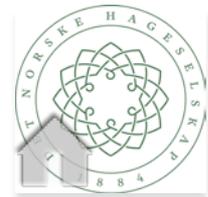
- ❖ *Cucurbita pepo*
- ❖ Norwegian: squash, sommersquash
- ❖ Other names: summer squash, courgette

- ❖ Sow indoors in April-May at 25 °C until seeds germinate, then lower temperature, plant outdoors after last spring frost date. Cover with fleece. Spacing: 1-2 m, both between plants and rows.
- ❖ Harvested immature, resembles cucumber, neutral flavor, used in salads, stews, stir-fried or grilled, etc. Side dish with meat and fish.

Lemon grass

- ❖ *Cymbopogon citratus*
- ❖ Norwegian: sitrongress
- ❖ Other names: oil grass

- ❖ Can grow to a height of 90 cm. Narrow, blue-green, smooth leaves with distinct midrib.
- ❖ Grows fast, requires rich, moist soil, should be grown in greenhouse, not below 13 °C, propagation best either by division or root cuttings
- ❖ Commonly used in Thai cuisine, slightly sour, mild taste of citrus and ginger
- ❖ Soups, salads, stews, with fish and shellfish, wok dishes, or the long, thin stems can be used fresh



Water spinach



- ❖ *Ipomoea aquatica*
- ❖ Norwegian: vannspinat
- ❖ Other names: river spinach, swamp cabbage, kang kong, water convolvulus, water morning glory, Chinese spinach

- ❖ Grown in tropical and subtropical regions in East and Southeast Asia
- ❖ Start from seeds indoors, spacing: 15-25 cm between plants, 15-30 cm between rows
- ❖ Will only grow well in Norway in warm, moist summers
- ❖ Use raw, stir-fried or cooked. Used in salads, soups and stews, fish and meat dishes.



Mint

- ❖ *Mentha* var.
- ❖ Norwegian: mynte
- ❖ Many varieties, characteristic aroma

- ❖ Perennial, woody herbs, usually reach a height of 30-100 cm.
- ❖ Propagate by taking cuttings from runners. Growth from seed is unreliable due to crossbreeding, seeds are highly variable.
- ❖ Leaves used as spice or garnish
- ❖ Used with lamb, fish and vegetable dishes, as ingredient in herb butter
- ❖ As a beverage: mint tea and as flavoring in drinks



Shiso



- ❖ *Perilla frutescens* var. *crispa*
- ❖ Norwegian: perilla
- ❖ Other names: beefsteak plant

- ❖ East-Asia, Japan, North America
- ❖ Start from seeds indoors, sow shallow at 20 °C. Plant outdoors at a spacing of 20-30 cm between plants and 30-60 cm between rows when the soil is warm, cover with fleece.
- ❖ The leaves are used raw or cooked, as ingredient in sushi, soups, rice dishes, etc.

Borlotti bean



- ❖ *Phaseolus vulgaris*
- ❖ Norwegian: borlottibønner, borlottobønner, tranebærbønner
- ❖ Other names: roman bean, cranberry bean

- ❖ Medium-sized beans, Italian specialty, sold either fresh or dried, red-streaked pods, seeds splotched with red markings
- ❖ Sow outdoors in warm soil, depth: 4 cm, spacing: 20 cm, rich soil, tie up like sugar peas
- ❖ Decorative in salads or as a side dish
- ❖ Can be cooked, steamed in butter, added to stews, or as a side with meat and fish dishes



Eggplant



- ❖ *Solanum melongena*
- ❖ Norwegian: aubergine, eggfrukt
- ❖ Other names: aubergine

- ❖ Asia, especially around the Mediterranean, but also worldwide
- ❖ Start from seeds indoors at 25 °C, after germination keep at 20 °C, lots of light. Top the plants at a height of 25 cm allowing 2-4 lateral shoots to grow. Transplant to a greenhouse, or plant in urns on balconies or in other protected places after last spring frost date.
- ❖ Plant parts contain solanine, toxic when raw
- ❖ Red, purple and yellow
- ❖ Can be cooked, mashed, fried or grilled, stuffed with meat, rice, etc.



Maize



❖ *Zea mays* var. *Saccharata*

❖ Norwegian: mais, sukkermais

❖ Other names: sweet corn

❖ Annual cereal crop

❖ Origin: highlands of Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia, and other regions of Mexico and Central America

❖ Sow a single kernel in pots indoors in March-April. Plant outdoors in a sunny location after last spring frost date. Spacing: 40 cm between plants, 80 cm between rows. Ears are harvested in August-September.

❖ Sweet corn ears can be boiled or grilled

