

THE  
KITCHEN  
WITCH



Heather McNally  
Portland-on-the-Rideau

**SALAD WITH A BITE**

Having had a Mother who was a wild-foods enthusiast I was forced at a young age into eating a strange summer variety of salads and became very adept at hiding great amounts in my lap. But I did develop a real liking for the tang of the nasturtium plant, most probably because I loved cream cheese and my mother never failed to stuff both prunes and nasturtium flowers with the silky concoction to decorate sandwich trays. Because they taste like a spicy watercress, young nasturtium leaves can be added to any salad or sprinkled on soups. When mixed with chives both the leaves and blossoms blend deliciously into omelets and potato salad.

Most gardeners enjoy cultivating this Peruvian native which was introduced to Europe about 1686. You will find the seed on all garden racks. It thrives in sandy soil with full sun. The flowers give a beautiful yellow orange showing and smell delightfull. Young seeds when pickled taste like capers but a large amount of older seeds can be toxic. The nasturtium is also a rich source of vitamin C and contains an herbal equivalent of penicillin.

When preparing foods with the nasturtium leaves be sure to use them just before serving since the foliage will turn bitter if it stands very long.

**Cream Cheese**

**Sandwich Spread**

Take one small bunch of clean radishes. Cut a few into thin slices and coarsely grate the rest. Add a tablespoon of chopped nasturium leaves and blend with a teaspoon of lemon juice into eight ounces of cream cheese. Slather the mixture on thin slices of rye bread and top with a whole nasturtium leaf and bright flower.

**Vinaigrette for Green**

**Spring Salad**

- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- ½ cup herb vinegar
- 1/3 cup light olive oil
- 1/3 cup walnut oil
- 1 tsp chopped shallots, salt & pepper

(whisk mixture to-gether, starting with mustard, then vinegar, then oils.)

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