

Did You Know?



Cumin *Cuminum cyminum*

- The aromatic and flavorful seeds (which are technically the fruits) of the cumin plant have been cultivated since around 2200-1400 B.C.E.
- Many cultures use cumin to flavor their food, including those in Europe, North Africa, Middle East, South Asia and Mexico.
- The ancient Greeks and Romans had containers of cumin on their tables and used it in place of black pepper and made a paste of it to spread on bread, much like peanut butter.
- During the Middle Ages, Europeans believed cumin would keep lovers faithful. Cumin cakes were given by girls before their lovers left for a long journey to both keep them faithful and ensure their safe return.
- Cumin's popularity in Europe was replaced by caraway.
- Cumin is used to flavor many diverse dishes such as curries, meats, pickles, cheeses, sausages, soups, chilies, and stews.
- The essential oil of cumin has both antibacterial and antioxidant properties.
- Grows as a short (about 12"), cool season annual.
- Best to store as whole seeds and grind just before using as the flavor degrades rapidly after grinding.
- Dry roasting the seeds before grinding enhances the flavor.
- The dark seeded form is called black cumin, *Cuminum nigrum* which is not to be confused with the Middle Eastern black cumin which is an entirely different plant, *Nigella sativa*.