

Did You Know?



Capers – *Capparis spinosa*

- Capers are the flower buds of the flinders rose (or caper bush) *Capparis spinosa*
- This thorny shrub is native to the Mediterranean and hardy to USDA zone 9
- Capers thrive in hot dry climates
- Grows as a mounding shrub with a sprawling habit
- The flower buds are hand-picked then either pickled, brined or packed in salt to preserve
- The bitter flavor is mellowed by pickling, resulting in a salty, slightly sweet taste
- Buds that bloom produce a white flower with purple stamens which then will form a small fruit called a caperberry.
- Caperberries are also pickled and are often served on antipasto platters or used as a garnish for martinis
- The smaller the caper, the better the quality, flavor and commercial value, and are also called nonpareilles or surfines; larger ones are known as capucines or communes
- Often used as a garnish with tomato sauces, meat, fish, salads, soups as well as pizza and antipasto
- Nutritionally, capers contain phytonutrients, antioxidants and the vitamins A, K, niacin, iron and riboflavin; low in calories (23 per 100 grams) but high in salt due to the pickling or brining process
- Historical use dates back to ancient Greeks and Romans as a carminative, analgesic, an expectorant, a diuretic and vasoconstrictor.
- It was believed Biblical times, that the caperberry acted as an aphrodisiac