

Growing Haloon / Halam

Lepidium sativum

The plant

Haloon is an Indian variety of garden cress that is grown widely by the Indian and Bangladeshi community on allotments. It is often grown to a larger size than the cress used for salads. Both the seeds and the leaves are used in cooking and for beneficial health properties.

Varieties and plant material

Haloon is generally not sold as named varieties, and the vast majority of it is sown from whole seed spice packets obtainable in Asian grocery stores.

Planting and site

Haloon is very easy to grow and can be grown in a number of ways. For people with a lack of space, haloon can be grown in a container on the windowsill. Sow any time of year into a small container of potting compost. Keep the container moist, and they should germinate within a few days and be ready to harvest from 10 days onwards.

If grown outside it grows best on a well-drained, moderately fertile soil. It can be sown any time from March until September. Sowings in mid summer will bolt very quickly. Sow directly into the site, into rows 20cm/8in apart, with 5cm/2in spacing between pinches of seeds. The soil should be kept moist. Germination is quick, within a few days. After a week, thin the seedlings to 10cm/4in spacing.

Haloon will need to be sown every two weeks to ensure a regular supply. If you are growing it for seed production, it will flower most quickly from sowings in May – June. It has white flowers followed by long thin seedpods.

Pests, weeds and diseases

Haloon is in the cabbage family, so should be included in the brassica part of the rotation to avoid spreading the risk of clubroot. As a brassica it is potentially prone to a whole host of pests and diseases, but in practice, it does not suffer extensively, as it is not in the ground for long. Slugs and snails are the most likely hazard to attack it as it emerges or pigeons, once it has reached a larger size.

Harvesting and storage

When using it as a leaf, cut with scissors after 10 days. The leaves will not store well and should be used soon after harvesting. Leaves can be used in salads or in soups, or if allowed to grow to a larger size, they are mixed with spinach in curries.

To collect seed, allow the pods to dry on the plant and harvest shortly before they split. Store in a dry place and



then separate the pods from the seeds. The seeds have a pungent mustard flavour. They may be heated in oil at the start of cooking or added at the end of cooking.

A teaspoon of seeds can be added to hot water; and the liquid is traditionally drunk to relieve a range of ailments including indigestion and hiccups. A traditional Indian remedy for rheumatic pains is a bag of Haloon seeds heated in a bag and applied to stiff joints.



This leaflet is produced as part of the Sowing New Seeds Project. This is funded by Big Lottery's Local Food Fund and has produced a resource of information on growing advice, experiences and seeds to promote growing of exotic produce in the UK.

For further information visit www.sowingnewseeds.org.uk
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