

Common Name: **Rocket**

Genus: *Eurca*

Species: *sativa*

Family: Brassicaceae

AKA: Dame's Rocket, White Rocket, Purple Rocket, Rucchette, Roquette, Dame's Violet, Vesper-Flower



Historical Uses:

Medical: “This being eaten raw in any great quantitie doth provoke Venery, and the seed of it also doth work ye like effect, being ureticiall and digestive, & good for ye belly.” (1)

“...The use of Rocket stirreth up bodily lust, especially the seed. It provoketh urine, and causeth good digestion. *Pliny* reporteth, that whosoever taketh the seed of Rocket before he be whipt, shall be so hardened, that he shall easily endure the paines. The root and seed stamped, and mixed with Vinegar and the gall of an Oxe, taketh away freckles, lentils, blacke and blew spots, and all such deformities of the face.” (2)

“This species is celebrated against diseases of the lungs. The juice is excellent in asthmas, and a syrup made of it in all oppressions and stuffings up of the breast; as also against inveterate coughs. Some have ascribed to it a provocative quality to venery, but this seems upon too slight grounds. It partakes much of the nature of the hedge-mustard.” (3)

Culinary: “They doe also use the seed of it in making of sawces, which that it may endure the longer, having macerated it first in vinegar, or milke, making it into Trochisks, they afterward lay it up in store.” (4)

”Rocket is a good sallet herbe, if it be eaten with Lettuce, Purslane, and such cold herbes; for being so eaten it is good and wholesome for the stomacke, and causeth that such cold





herbes do not over-coole the same: otherwise, to be eaten alone, it causeth head-ache, and heateth too much.” (5)

Folklore/Astrology: “All this kind of rockets are *martial* plants.” (6)

“In the language of flowers, the Rocket has been taken to represent deceit, since it gives out a lovely perfume in the evening, but in the daytime has none. Hence its [former] name of *Hesperis*, or **Vesper-Flower**, given it by the Ancients.” (7)

Contemporary Uses:

Parts Used: Whole plant, leaves, flower buds, flowers, seeds, oil

Medicinal: “In former days doctors combined with poets in attributing marvelous virtues to this plant. It is regarded

principally as antiscorbutic. A strong dose will cause vomiting, and may be taken in the place of ipecacuanha. Powdered, the effect is less strong than that of mustard.” (8)

Culinary: “Mainly as a salad herb, notably in *mesclun*, a traditional mixed salad of tiny leaves from the Nice area of France. May also be added to stir-fries, soups, and sauces, notably arugula sauce in Umbria, Italy. Flowers and flower buds are added to salads. Seed yield edible oil, known as ‘jamba oil’, and are used as a substitute for mustard, or sprouted for salads.” (9)

Area of Origin: Mediterranean, East Asia

Physical description: Upright, mustard-like annual with asymmetric, lyre-shaped to pinnately lobed and divided, toothed leaves.

Plant type: Annual

Form: Upright stems

Height: 24”-36”

Flower color: Cream, purple veined

Flowering period: April-September

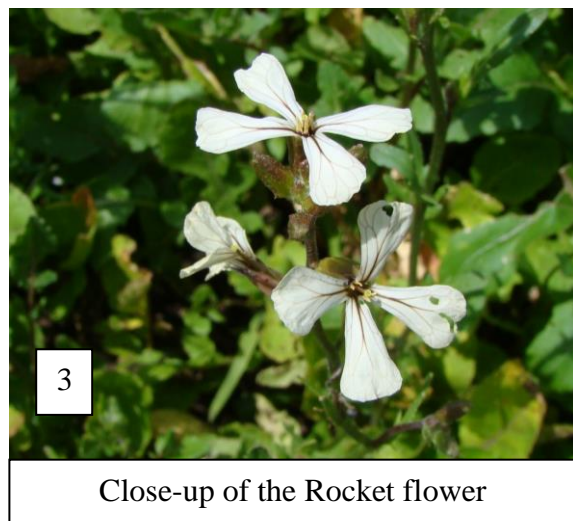
Soil type/requirements: Moist, fertile soil

Fruit: Slender, erect pods

Hardiness zone: USDA “Hardy”

Sun requirements: Full sun/partial shade

Propagation: By seed sown from late winter to early summer.



Sources

1. Dioscorides, p. 181
2. Gerard, p. 246-248
3. Culpepper, p. 134
4. Dioscorides, p. 181
5. Gerard, p. 246-248
6. Culpepper, p. 134
7. Grieve, p. 681
8. Ibid
9. Bown, p. 204

Illustrations/Images:

1. Gerard's Herbal 1633 ed.
2. PSUMG 2014
3. PSUMG 2014