

## WINTER CRESS

*Barbarea*



Winter Cress (*Barbarea Vulgaris*) also known as Yellow Rocket is one of the most commonly found winter wild edible plants. The leaves are available all year round, even in the winter, especially if the weather is mild.

Winter Cress has the unusual habit of growing vigorously during warm periods in winter and it derived its Latin name *Barbarea* from the fact that its young leaves are green and can be eaten on St. Barbara's day, in early December.

The leaves are highly nutritious sources of B vitamins, calcium, potassium, and fiber. Unlike many plants, the flowers are a good source of protein. By the time the stalks appear, the leaves are too bitter to eat, but the flower buds, when they appear look and taste like broccoli and are quite good. The flowers themselves are also edible.

The plant is said to possess anti-carcinogenic properties. Cherokee Indians used a tea brewed from the aerial parts as a blood purifier. Also used as an appetite stimulator. Europeans used poulticed leaves to treat wounds.

Note: There are some studies which indicate Wintercress may cause kidney malfunction, and should not be taken internally