

# Garden Cress

(Source: <https://www.healwithfood.org/health-benefits/garden-cress-nutritional-benefits.php#ixzz5azYozLOk>)

In India and Europe, the medicinal properties of garden cress (*Lepidium sativum*) have been recognized for centuries. This culinary and healing herb has a tangy, peppery taste similar to leaf mustard and [watercress](#), which is actually not surprising considering that garden cress is botanically related to both. Thanks to its distinctive flavor and high nutritional value, garden cress makes a tasty and healthy addition to salads and sandwiches. Here's the full scoop on the nutritional and health benefits of garden cress:

## Potential Anti-Cancer Effects

A study funded by Australia's Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) assessed the anti-cancer potential of a number of Brassica vegetables, including garden cress. For each tested vegetable, an anti-cancer score was calculated based on the vegetable's glucosinolate content. While glucosinolates themselves have limited biological activity, their metabolites – particularly isothiocyanates – appear to have significant cancer-fighting potential due to their ability to promote the elimination of potential carcinogens from the body. However, many Brassica species, including garden cress, contain epithiospecifier protein (ESP), a compound that promotes the conversion of glucosinolates into nitriles (which have no anti-cancer properties) rather than isothiocyanates.

However, despite containing ESP, garden cress still had significant anti-cancer potential relative to many other vegetables tested. Even when the potential effects of ESP were taken into account, garden cress still appeared to have as much or more anti-cancer potential than radishes, turnips, cabbage, [kohlrabi](#), Chinese broccoli, mizuna, komatsuna, or choy sum.

## **A Powerhouse of Carotenoids (Good for Your Vision and Eye Health)**

If you're still not impressed by the nutritional value of garden cress, then consider this: by eating just one ounce of garden cress you'll be supplying your body with nearly 40% of the Daily Value of vitamin A (in the form of carotenoids). As you may already know, vitamin A and carotenoids are considered one of the best nutrients for the eyes due to their ability to reduce the risk of impaired night vision, cataracts, retinitis pigmentosa, and even age-related macular degeneration, a common cause of blindness in older people.

## **Garden Cress Contains Even More Vitamin C Than Oranges**

So you thought [oranges](#) are the ultimate vitamin C champion? Well, guess what, fresh garden cress contains much more vitamin C than fresh oranges! Just one ounce of garden cress delivers a whopping 32 of the Daily Value of vitamin C – that is 7% more than what you would get from an equal amount of fresh orange. Vitamin C is crucial to keeping you skin, bones, and gums strong and healthy, but it also helps prevent iron deficiency by improving your body's capability to absorb iron from foods.

## **Eating Garden Cress May Provide Cardiovascular Benefits**

Scientific research suggests that vitamin C may also help keep your cardiovascular system healthy, so adding garden cress to your diet may be a smart thing to do if you're trying to improve your cardiovascular health. A study published in the April 2004 edition of the *Journal of the American College of Nutrition* reported that the study participants who received a daily supplement containing 500 milligrams of vitamin C experienced a 24% drop in their plasma CRP levels after just two months. Recent evidence suggests that CRP levels (C-reactive protein levels) are a good measure of a person's heart disease risk, potentially even better than cholesterol levels.

In addition, garden cress is supercharged with vitamin K, another nutrient that is thought to play a key role in maintaining

cardiovascular health. By adding just half an ounce of garden cress to your salad you'll be covering almost 100% of the Daily Value of vitamin K!

## **Smile, Garden Cress May Be Good for Your Teeth, Too!**

Glucotropaeolin, one of the main glucosinolates found in garden cress, is a pre-cursor to benzyl isothiocyanate (BIT), a compound that may help fight dental caries. A study published in *Microbios Letters* in 1988 found that BIT inhibited the growth and acid production of *Streptococcus mutans*, a bacterium that has been linked to the development of dental caries.

## **How to Maximize Nutritional Value of Garden Cress**

The nutritional value of garden cress begins to deteriorate immediately after harvest. Therefore, one of the best ways to maximize the health benefits of garden cress is to grow your own cress and harvest it as needed. And the best part is, you can easily grow garden cress indoors, any time of year. For details, see [How to Grow Garden Cress Indoors](#).