

Rhubarb Trivia

"We would just wipe it off and chew
Then watch each other's faces go askew
So sour yet good
It was in my boyhood
Things were tastier circa 1942"

"Your rhubarb, I've noticed it grows
By the outhouse where everyone goes!
Grandad said, "Lad, it isn't so bad
They're family! Just people we knows!"

"Rhubarb when raw is so tough
And its leaves contain poisonous stuff
But when cleaned and de-soiled
Dipped in sugar and boiled
Then the stalks are quite tasty enough"

"Rhubarb is much better in pies
Sweet, sour and attracting flies
It's good as gooseberry
And tasty as cherry
Please have a slice...do not be shy"

The word "rhubarb" comes from a Latin word, "Rhabbarum" meaning "root of the barbarian". The Romans called people who ate rhubarb, barbarians. So, we are gathering today as barbarians!

Rhubarb is a relative of buckwheat and thrives in cold climates. It is a native of Tibet, Mongolia, and Siberia.

The Chinese cultivated rhubarb as early as 2700 B.C.

The Quakers called rhubarb the "Persian Apple" because they thought it was an exotic fruit from Asia.

In the 1800's, the Russians took rhubarb to Alaska to protect them from scurvy. And because of its wonderful medicinal properties, rhubarb became very desirable.

In the mid 1500's, it sold for ten times the price of cinnamon and by the mid 1600's, rhubarb was double the price of opium!

If you found yourself imprisoned for some offense, a little rhubarb knowledge was as good as a "get out of jail free" card.

Rhubarb was used to protect from gum disease yet it could give you a terrible stomach ache.

Rhubarb was given as a general over-all tonic for anything that ailed you. It was given to children as a blood purifier or to induce vomiting yet it was a wonderful cure for constipation. Perhaps we could get rhubarb sauce for breakfast instead of prunes! Although rhubarb is a vegetable, it is treated as a fruit and is nicknamed the "pie plant" because pie is one of its primary uses.

Rhubarb can clean your burned pot or ruin it if it happens to be made of aluminum. The leaves can be made into an environmentally friendly liquid strong enough to kill a variety of garden bugs. You can dye with it, dye your hair with it, make a sweater from its fibers, make paper, or use its leaves to fashion stepping stones or bird baths.