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Cryptotaenia japonica

[Synonyms : *Cryptotaenia canadensis* var. *japonica*]

WILD CHERVIL is an evergreen perennial. Native to China and Japan it has small white flowers.

It is also known as Honewort, Japanese honewort, Japanese parsley, *Mitsuba* (Japanese and Swedish), and Trefoil.

Warning – the leaves can be poisonous if eaten in large quantities and extended contact with them can cause dermatitis.

Japonica means ‘of or from Japan’.

In Japan authorities indicate that it is diligently cultivated, as well as in China and Korea, but apparently virtually nowhere else. It would seem that wild chervil leaves and stems (the latter both green and blanched white) perform a similar role for the Japanese, Chinese and Koreans as parsley (*Petroselinum crispum*) does in salads, as flavouring in savoury dishes and as a garnish in the West, or as coriander (*Coriandrum sativum*) is used throughout the rest of Asia. The stems can provide an alternative to celery (*Apium graveolens* var. *dulce*) and the root can also be eaten raw or cooked. The seeds can be used as a condiment.

Some records indicate that slugs and snails are particularly partial to the plant.

Medicinally, wild chervil has been used in Asian medicine for treating some female disorders, as well as internal bleeding, fever and colds.