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*Parmentiera*

*Bignoniaceae*

*Parmentiera* commemorates a French agricultural economist and apothecary, Antoine-Augustin Parmentier (1737-1813), who is probably best remembered for his promotion of the potato (*Solanum tuberosum*) in France, as well as beyond her borders. In 1757 he joined the French army (embroiled in Seven Years' War of 1754 and 1756–1763) as an apothecary and while prisoner of the Prussians consumed a diet consisting primarily of potatoes, an experience which would be invaluable in the future (most European countries accepted the plant as animal feed, including France). On his return to France (where he became apothecary to the Hôtel-des-Invalides) he spent many years promoting the potato and overcoming misinformation eg. that it could cause leprosy, and bigotry. He also attempted to improve baking methods and founded a breadmaking school. He encouraged the use of both cornmeal or maize (*Zea*), and of sweet chestnut flour (*Castanea sativa*), the latter native to the south of the Country, and was also one of those encouraging sugar extraction from sugar beet (*Beta vulgaris* subsp. *vulgaris*) (when the British cut off Carribean supplies of cane sugar, *Saccharum officinarum*). He manufactured an improved sea biscuit and, during the French Revolution (1789-1795), was responsible for the preparation of salted provisions. He also enhanced cheese-making and mushroom culture. Parmentier was made Inspector-General of the Health Service under Napoleon and was responsible, from 1805, for a mandatory smallpox vaccination programme. Today many dishes still celebrate the Parmentier name.