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Petasites japonicus

[Synonyms : *Nardosmia japonica*]

GIANT BUTTERBUR is a perennial. Native to China, Japan and Korea it has small, pale yellow (male) and pale mauve to creamy white (female) flowers on separate plants before the leaves.

It is also known as *Bitterskråp* (Swedish), Bog rhubarb, Creamy butterbur, *Devětsil japonský* (Czech), Fuki (English, Japanese), *Fuki no tou* (Japanese), Japanese butterbur, Japanese sweet coltsfoot, *Japans Hoefblad* (German), *Japansk Hestehov* (Danish), Sachalin, and Sweet coltsfoot.

This perennial can be invasive.

Japonicus means ‘of or from Japan’.

In Japan the leafstalks are not only cooked like rhubarb (*Rheum x hybridum*) and eaten as a Spring or Summer vegetable but they are also preserved in salt or miso. The Japanese use the slightly bitter-tasting, unopened flower buds too as a condiment or soup garnish and, when boiled, as a vegetable as well. Cooked young flowering stems are eaten. Apparently for many Japanese the flavour of these stems or the flower buds is synonymous with Spring.

Leafstalks have served as walking sticks and Japanese children are said to have played at using the huge leaves like umbrellas.

Medicinally, Asian medicine has used the plant for treating asthma, some tuberculosis, coughs and other respiratory disorders.