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Pimpinella saxifraga

[Synonyms : *Carum nigrum*, *Pimpinella dissecta*, *Pimpinella sanguisorba*]

BURNET-SAXIFRAGE is a perennial. Native to Europe, the Middle East and Siberia it has small white flowers with crimson stamens.

It is also known as *Backanis* (Swedish), *Bedrník obecný* (Czech), *Bedrovník lomikameňový* (Slovak), Bennet, Black carroway, *Bockrot* (Swedish), *Boucage* (French), *Kleine Bibernelle* (German), Lesser burnet, Lesser burnet saxifrage, *Piéd de bouc* (French), *Piè di becco* (Italian), Pimpernel, Pimpinella (English, Italian), *Pukinjuuri* (Finnish), Salad burnet, *Sanguisorba* (Spanish), Saxifrage, Small pimpernel, Solidstem burnet saxifrage, and *Tormaen Burnet* (Welsh); and in flower language is said to be a symbol of affection.

The young leaves of burnet-saxifrage used to be included as a flavouring in salads and fruit cups as borage (*Borago officinalis*) would be today. A bunch used also to be suspended in a cask of beer as flavouring and it was used too to balance the taste of tart or spoiled wine. In parts of the Mediterranean the seeds have been applied as a condiment. Today the oil is used as a bitter flavouring in some liqueurs.

It was introduced to North America in the 16th Century by the early settlers who took plants with them when they left Europe (so it must have been prized then far more than in modern times).

Although the plant can be used medicinally today little seems to be known about its history prior to the Middle Ages when records then begin to make reference to it. Herbalists used it for healing wounds, and also for treating asthma, fluid retention, gout and rheumatism. The fresh root was chewed as a remedy for toothache, and a decoction was recommended for removing freckles.