



International Union of Soil Sciences

The Eparote (*Dysphania ambrosioides*)

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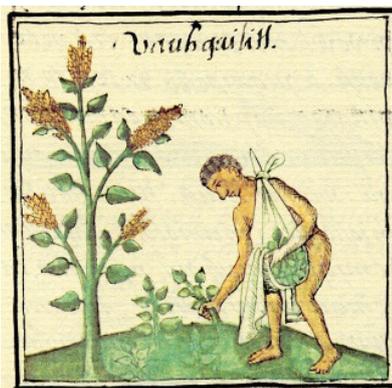


The Epazote (*Dysphania ambrosioides*)



Hi, I'm Tonantzin and today I'm going to tell you about a unique plant for Mexico.

Did you know that the word epazote derives from the Nahuatl epazotl (skunk) and zotli (grass), which means "skunk plant" because it has a very intense aroma? Its scientific name is *Dysphania ambrosioides*.



It has been used in Mexican cuisine since pre-Hispanic times, and because it gives a unique flavor to our food, we use it as a condiment in many of our dishes.

It is part of the group of Mexican quelites, a word of Nahuatl origin (quilitl) that means "edible grass."

In Mexico, the states that produce it the most are Puebla, Tlaxcala, and the State of Mexico.



It is a very nutritious plant that contains vitamins and minerals essential for our healthy growth.

It also has an imperative medicinal use, as it has been proven to kill some intestinal parasites. It is anti-inflammatory, if you have the flu, it helps you expel the phlegm from your lungs using ONLY 1 or 2 leaves to make an infusion, and if you have a wound, you can apply it on the skin to avoid infection.



It is not only used in Mexico but also in Latin American countries such as Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Peru, where it is known as paico (from the Quechua word *payqu*)

One of the advantages of epazote is that it is easy to grow at home; you only have to follow these steps:

1. Buy epazote seeds from a nearby nursery and plan to plant them in late winter or early spring



2. Fill three-quarters of a pot with soil. If you have compost, you can add some.

3. Sow the seeds and add some more soil being careful that they are not too buried.



4. Water the pot with little water and repeat this activity every other day, without letting the soil become waterlogged.

5. Place the pot where it will receive sunlight because the epazote likes its heat very much.





You can also plant it directly in your garden, following the same instructions I just mentioned.

Now you must be patient. Our plant will take approximately 55 days to grow; when this time comes, we can harvest it or cut it.



Now you can use it for cooking a delicious dish by seasoning it with a few epazote leaves.





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Editor: Dr. Laura Bertha Reyes Sánchez

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