

## Topic Page: [Buckwheat](#)

Definition: **buckwheat** from *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*  
Any of a group of cereal plants. The name usually refers to *Fagopyrum esculentum*, which reaches about 1 m/3 ft in height and can grow on poor soil in a short summer. The highly nutritious black triangular seeds (groats) are eaten by both animals and humans. They can be cooked and eaten whole or as a cracked meal (kasha), or ground into flour, often made into pancakes. (Genus *Fagopyrum*, family Polygonaceae.)

### weblinks

Buckwheat

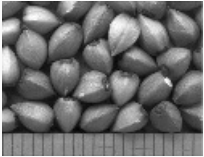


Image from:

[Buckwheat seeds \(achenes\) \(image by... in The Encyclopedia of Seeds: Science, Technology and Uses](#)

### Summary Article: **buckwheat**

From *The Columbia Encyclopedia*

common name for certain members of the Polygonaceae, a family of herbs and shrubs found chiefly in north temperate areas and having a characteristic pungent juice containing oxalic acid. Species native to the United States are most common in the West. The largest genus of the family, *Polygonum* (or *Persicaria*), contains the knotweeds and the smartweeds, found in many parts of the world. The common smartweed (*P. hydropiper*) is an annual sometimes called water pepper for its acrid quality. Several species of the dock genus (*Rumex*) are sorrels (the common name used also for the similarly acrid but unrelated oxalis). The garden, or green, sorrel (*R. acetosa*) and the sheep, red, or field sorrel (*R. acetosella*) have long been used in Europe for salads and greens. Among the plants used as potherbs are the patience or spinach dock (*R. patientia*) and the tanner's dock (*R. hymenosepalus*); the latter is the source of canaigre, a substance used for tanning. Economically the important members of the family are of the rhubarb genus (*Rheum*) and the buckwheat genus (*Fagopyrum*), both native to Asia. Most of the rhubarb cultivated for the edible thick, fleshy leafstalks is *R. rhaponticum*, called also pieplant and wine plant. Medicinal rhubarb is obtained from this and other species of the genus. The cultivated buckwheat (*F. esculentum*) has been grown in the Old World since the Middle Ages as a honey plant and for its characteristic three-cornered grain, which is utilized for poultry and stock feed. Buckwheat flour is used in the United States, Japan, and eastern Europe; the plant is sown as a cover crop and is a food staple. The genus *Eriogonum* includes the wild, or yellow, buckwheat (*E. allenii*), restricted to the Appalachian shale barrens, and many Western species, e.g., the desert trumpet (*E. inflatum*), a desert flower of arid plains and plateaus. The interesting genus *Koenigia* has only one species, but it is found in the Arctic, in the Himalayas, and in Tierra del Fuego. Buckwheat is classified in the division Magnoliophyta, class Magnoliopsida, order Polygonales, family Polygonaceae.

**APA**

Chicago

Harvard

MLA

buckwheat. (2018). In P. Lagasse, & Columbia University, *The Columbia encyclopedia* (8th ed.). New York, NY: Columbia University Press. Retrieved from <https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/buckwheat>

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## APA

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## Chicago

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## Harvard

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## MLA

"buckwheat." *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, Paul Lagasse, and Columbia University, Columbia University Press, 8th edition, 2018. *Credo Reference*, <https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/buckwheat>. Accessed 15 Sep. 2019.