

3980. HIBISCUS ESCULENTUS.**Okra.**

From Cairo, Egypt. Received through Messrs. Lathrop and Fairchild (No. 299), December 28, 1899.

"Short-fruited variety." Reported to be a heavier cropper than No. 3979. A French seedsman has just ordered 200 tons of seed of this variety. Preferred by the natives for drying purposes when young; very hardy. The young fruits, one-half to three-quarters of an inch long, are strung on strings and dried. In this state they are kept indefinitely. This variety is reported the best for this purpose. Sow 4 or 5 seeds in hills 1 foot apart, on ridges $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 feet apart. Okra is often planted as a mixed crop with cotton.

3981. ERUCA SATIVA.**Rocket salad.**

From Cairo, Egypt. Received through Messrs. Lathrop and Fairchild (No. 300), December 28, 1899.

"Seed broadcasted. Forty days until harvest. Said to be an excellent Egyptian variety."

"A low-growing plant with leaves like those of the radish. Stem erect, smooth, and branching; flowers rather large, white or yellow, veined with violet; seed vessels cylindrical, with three not very prominent ribs on each side; seeds brown, smooth, and somewhat flattened. The seed is sown in the open ground from April to the end of summer, and the leaves may be cut in about six weeks or two months. In spring or autumn fresh leaves are abundantly produced after cutting, but in midsummer the plants run to seed rapidly. Frequent waterings are useful in keeping the leaves tender, and in modifying the flavor, which is very strong and somewhat like that of horse-radish. The young leaves are eaten as salad." (*Vilmorin*.)

3982. LUFFA CYLINDRICA (?).**Sponge gourd.**

From Cairo, Egypt. Received through Messrs. Lathrop and Fairchild (No. 301), December 28, 1899.

"This is a very pretty perennial creeper for trees or trellises. It requires little care and forms a luxuriant foliage. The blossoms are much sought by honey bees. When sown in March in France it yielded fruits in July. When young the fruits are pickled like cucumbers, or fried. The mature fruits contain a tough skeleton of the greatest convenience, when dried and split open, as a scrubbing brush for bath or kitchen. Although a perennial, it is grown as an annual preferably, as the fruits which are grown the first year are larger. It is very profitable as a small crop in Egypt. The plant requires plenty of water and is easily propagated by layering. Most native houses are provided with the skeletons of this gourd for domestic purposes. Hats and various other articles of apparel are manufactured from Luffa fiber."

3983. LACTUCA SATIVA.**Lettuce.**

From Cairo, Egypt. Received through Messrs. Lathrop and Fairchild (No. 302), December 28, 1899.

"Grown in Upper Egypt exclusively for oil production. Sown broadcast in beds and left to seed. Oil is pressed from the ground seed precisely as from cotton seed. The yield of oil is 200 kilos per 4,200 square meters, or from 9 to 11 pounds per bushel of seed. The oil is an excellent substitute for olive oil."

3984. BRASSICA RAPA (?).**Strawberry spinach.**

From Cairo, Egypt. Received through Messrs. Lathrop and Fairchild (No. 303), December 28, 1899.

"Leaves of the 'Strawberry spinach' are used as a salad, especially on account of the green coloring matter, which is easily extracted and gives a brilliant color to vegetable dishes. The seed is sown broadcast. Five to ten cuttings of leaves may be made. The scientific name is doubtful. This is reported as an Egyptian variety."