

## Our Name



### The meaning of our name:

sinapi: mustard (a plant)

Original Word: σινάπι, εως, ἡ

Part of Speech: Noun, Neuter

Transliteration: sinapi

Phonetic Spelling: (sin'-ap-ee)

Definition: mustard (a plant)

Usage: mustard (probably the shrub, not the herb).

Forms and Transliterations: σινάπεως σινάπεως -  
sinapeos sinapeōs sinápeos sinápeōs



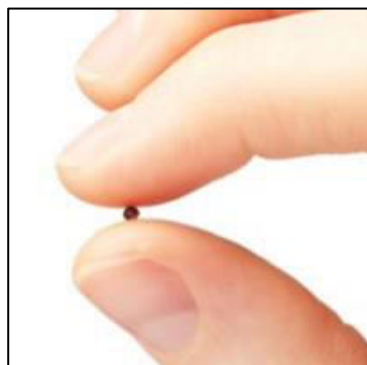
σίναπι – a mustard plant ("tree"), always used in connection with its seed (the smallest of all Palestinian seeds in common use). Mustard is a plant of the genus sinapis, a pod-bearing, shrub-like plant, growing wild.

#### Definition

Mustard, the name of a plant which in oriental countries grows from a very small seed and attains to the height of a tree, 10 feet (3 m) and more. The mustard seed is the smallest of all seeds that a Palestinian farmer would sow in his field. A mustard plant reaches a height of three meters (about ten feet). This is a huge plant when fully matured and bears very tiny seeds.

#### Relevant Scripture

*Matthew 2, Matthew 13:31; Matthew 17:20; Mark 1; Mark 4:31; Luke 17:6; Luke 2; Luke 13:19.*



## The Parables of the Mustard Seed

## In the Gospel of Matthew

“31 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field:

32 Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.” (*Matthew 13:31–32 KJV*)

## In the Gospel of Mark

“30 And he said, Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it?

31 It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth:

32 But when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it.” (*Mark 4:30–32 KJV*)

## In the Gospel of Luke

“18 Then said he, Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I resemble it?

19 It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it.” (*Luke 13:18–19 KJV*)

The plant referred to here is generally considered to be black mustard, a large annual plant up to 9 feet (2.7 m) tall, but growing from a proverbially small seed (this smallness is also used to refer to faith in *Matthew 17:20 and Luke 17:6*). According to rabbinical sources, Jews did not grow the plant in gardens, and this is consistent with Matthew's description of it growing in a field. Luke tells the parable with the plant in a garden instead; this is presumably recasting the story for an audience outside the Levant. I. Howard Marshall writes that the parable "suggests the growth of the kingdom of God from tiny beginnings to worldwide size.

Pliny the Elder, in his Natural History (published around AD 78) writes that "mustard... is extremely beneficial for the health. It grows entirely wild, though it is improved by being transplanted: but on the other hand when it has once been sown it is scarcely possible to get the place free of it, as the seed when it falls germinates at once."

## Mustard Tree Facts

Considered by some people to be the source of the mustard seed mentioned in Scripture, the mustard tree grows wild throughout much of the Middle East and Africa. Generally attaining a height no taller than 25 feet with fleshy, 1 1/2- to 3-inch leaves, the tree takes advantage of damp conditions near rivers and waterholes but can survive on fewer than 8 inches of rainfall per year. The mustard tree is not the source of the seeds used to make condiment mustard; those seeds are harvested from herbs of the Brassica family.



Goats, camels and other desert browsers gobble up the mustard trees mustard-flavored and moist edible leaves. From January through April, the tree produces 2- to 5-inch-long panicles of small, greenish-yellow flowers. After pollination, those flowers set pea-size fruits that ripen to a maroon shade; each fruit contains a single seed. Although sweeter than the leaves, the fruits also have a pungent flavor and can be consumed raw, dried or cooked.

Mustard tree is also called toothbrush tree because the tender young sticks cut from the tree have been used as antibacterial teeth cleaners for hundreds of years. People wishing to "brush" their teeth generally strip off a young stick's bark and chew on the stick's inner fibers. Those fibers provide the peelu often found in alternative toothpastes.

The Greek word for mustard is *sinapi*, and the Hebrew equivalent would be *chardal*. The most probable candidates of the mustard spoken about in the Bible is the black mustard (*Brassica nigra*), the white mustard (*Sinapis arvensis* or *Sinapsis alba*) and possibly *Sinapsis juncea*. All belong to the *Cruciferae* (also known as the *Brassicaceae*), the mustard family. All four have small seeds and are characterized by rapid germination and seedling growth and are annuals which flower in the late spring. Modern commercial mustard is prepared by grinding the seeds of black and white mustard and mixing them together. But it can hardly be yellow mustard, as this is not sown in gardens or fields. So the logical conclusion seems to be, as many experts agree, that the parable points to *Brassica nigra*.

A grown black mustard would still be a herb, botanically speaking, but sometimes a very big herb, popularly considered a shrub. There are wild mustard plants over ten feet tall near the Jordan River, and even in moderate climate, a mustard plant may grow that tall, provided it gets enough sunshine. It must, moreover, be remarked that generally, trees in most parts of the Holy Land do not reach a large stature. The stem of a mustard plant also becomes dry and wood-like, which gives it the aspect of a tree. Many have pointed out that this plant, or any mustard, could not support roosting birds.

In summary, the three features of the mustard plant emphasized by the Lord are the small size of the seed, the large size of the plant in relation to the seed, and the rapid growth. This will help us as we consider the controversies that have arisen as to the exegesis of this parable.

# Examples of mustard trees



(Source: Google)

## Credits

<https://radicalremedies.files.wordpress.com/2015/12/mustard.jpg>

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