

Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH)

ORGANISM (ORGA)

BCH-ORGA-SCBD-9845-4

LAST UPDATED: 14 JUN 2012

Organism information

Scientific name

Brassica rapa

Taxonomic Classification

Kingdom Plantae
Phylum Magnoliophyta
Class Magnoliopsida
Order Capparales
Family Brassicaceae
Genus Brassica
Species Brassica rapa

Common name(s)

Canola plant

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Type of organism

Crops

Domestication

Domesticated

Characteristics related to biosafety

Centre(s) of genetic diversity

Wild *B. rapa* (subspecies *sylvestris* L.) is regarded as the species from which the ssp. *rapa* (cultivated turnip) and *oleifera* (turnip rape) originated. It is native throughout Europe, Russia, central Asia and the Near East, with Europe proposed as one centre of origin. There is some debate as to whether the Asian and Near Eastern types arose from an independent centre of origin in Afghanistan and then moved eastward as *B. rapa* became domesticated. Prakash and Hinata (1980) suggest that oleiferous *B. rapa* subspecies developed in two places, giving rise to two different races, one European and the other Asian.

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Geographical distribution

Typically, *B. rapa* is found in coastal lowlands, high montane areas (the slopes of high valleys or mountain ranges), and alpine and high sierras. In Canada, where it is a recent introduction,

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it is found on disturbed land, typically in crops, fields and gardens, along roadsides, and on waste sites

Common use(s)

Food

Additional Information

Today, two species of Brassica have commercialized varieties with "double low" characteristics, i.e. low erucic acid content in the fatty acid profile and very low glucosinolate content in the meal, characteristics desirable for high-quality vegetable oil and high-quality animal feed.

In North America two species (*B. napus* and *B. rapa*) are considered to be of "canola" quality.

See also <http://bch.cbd.int/database/record.shtml?documentid=12083> for information on *B. napus*

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Other relevant website addresses and/or attached documents

? [CFIA- The Biology of Brassica rapa L. \(English \)](#)

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Further Information

Questions about the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety or the operation of the Biosafety Clearing-House may be directed to the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

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