

Linnaeus has distinguished the different species of rhubarb by the names *Rheum Palmatum*, *R. Rhaponticum*, \* *R. Rhabarbarum*, *R. Compactum*, and *R. Ribes*.

Botanists have long differed in their opinions, which of these species is the true rhubarb; and that question does not yet appear to be satisfactorily determined. According to the general opinion, it is supposed to be the *Rheum* † *Palmatum*; the seeds of which were originally procured from a Bucharian merchant, and distributed to the principal botanists in Europe. Hence this plant has been cultivated with great success; and is now common in all our botanical gardens. The learned doctor ‡ Hope, professor of medicine and botany in the university of Edinburgh, having made trials of the powder of this root, in the same doses in which the foreign rhubarb is given, found no difference in the effects; and from thence conclusions have been drawn, with great appearance of probability, that this is the plant which produces the true rhubarb. But this inference does not appear to be absolutely conclusive; for the same trials have been repeated, and with similar success, on the roots of the *R. Rhaponticum* and *R. Rhabarbarum*.

The leaves of the *R. Rhaponticum* are round, and sometimes broader than they are long. This species is found abundantly in the loamy and dry deserts

\* See Murray's edition of Linnaeus *Systema Vegetab.* Gott. 1744. In the former edition of Linnaeus, *Rheum Rhabarbarum* is called *It. Undulatum*.

† Mr. Pallas (to whom I am chiefly indebted for this account of the Tartarian and Siberian Rhubarb) assured me, that he never found the *R. Palmatum* in any part of Siberia.

‡ Phil. Trans. for 1765, n. 290.

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