

MRS. BEETON Suggests Cucumber

Mrs. Beeton often gave historical information about ingredients. Of the cucumber she wrote:

“The antiquity of this fruit is very great. In the sacred writings we find that the people of Israel regretted it, whilst sojourning in the desert; and at the present time, the cucumber, and other fruits of its class, forms a large portion of the food of the Egyptian people. By the Eastern nations generally, as well as by the Greeks and Romans, it was greatly esteemed. Like the melon, it was originally brought from Asia by the Romans, and in the 14th century it was common in England, although, in the time of the ‘War of the Roses,’ it seems no longer to have been cultivated. It is a cold food, and of difficult digestion when eaten raw.

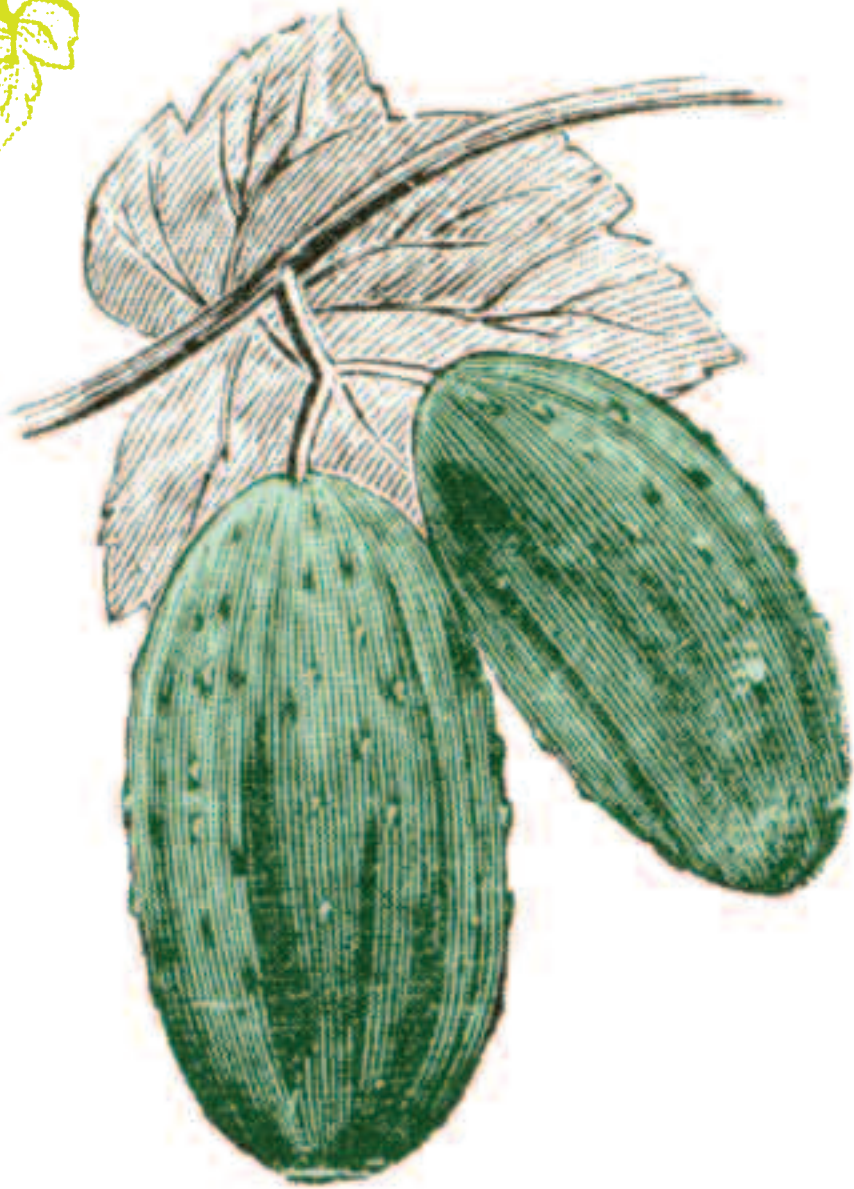
As a preserved sweetmeat, however, it is esteemed one of the most agreeable.”

The Book of Household Management contains recipes for cucumbers that are either pickled or cooked, but never raw. While pickled cucumber remains a favourite today, cooked cucumber is rare. Mrs. Beeton suggests *Warm Cucumber Soup* or *Fried Cucumbers* as tasty options.

Visit www.vandusengarden.org for these two recipes or www.mrsbeeton.com for all her recipes.



Photo: David Cavagnaro



Cookbook cover of 1883

