

Sage

Culinary uses

Leaves are used to flavour meat dishes especially pork, liver, goose, soups, stews, sauces and sausages. Also stuffings for pork and poultry and fresh or dried leaves can be made into tea.

Properties

An astringent, antiseptic, tonic herb with a camphoraceous aroma. It relaxes, suppresses perspiration, improves liver function and digestion and has anti-inflammatory, anti depressant and oestrogenic effects.

Medicinal uses

Internally used for indigestion, liver complaints, night sweats, excessive salivation (as in Parkinson disease), profuse perspiration (tuberculosis), anxiety, depression, female sterility and menopausal problems.

Externally used on insect bites and throat, mouth, gum and skin infections.

How to grow

Well-drained to dry, neutral to alkaline soil in sun. Plants available from spring. Hardy.



Thyme

Culinary uses

Fresh or dried leaves and flowering tops are used to flavour soups, fish, meat, sausages, marinades, vinegar, stuffings and baked or sautéed vegetables.

Properties

An aromatic, warming, astringent herb which is an expectorant. It improves digestion, relaxes muscle spasms and controls coughing. It is strongly antiseptic and anti-fungal.

Medicinal uses

Internally used for dry coughs, whooping cough, bronchitis, bronchial catarrh, asthma, laryngitis, indigestion, gastritis and diarrhoea and enuresis in children. Externally used for tonsillitis, gum disease, rheumatism, arthritis and fungal infections.

How to grow

Plant in well-drained soil in sun. Prefers neutral to alkaline soil and thrives in stony or rocky situations. Plant in spring by seed or division.



How to grow... Herbs



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Sandy Road
Willington
Bedford
01234 838777

Woburn Sands
Newport Road
Woburn Sands
Milton Keynes
01908 583511

Rosemary

Culinary uses

Fresh or dried leaves are used to flavour meat (especially lamb and goat), sausages, stuffings, soups and stews. Very small amounts, often ground or powdered, are added to biscuits and jams. Fresh sprigs are steeped whole in vinegar, wine or olive oil to give a rosemary flavour to sauces and dressings. Flowers can be added to salads.

Properties

An aromatic restorative herb that relaxes spasms, relieves pain and increases perspiration rate. It also stimulates the liver and gall bladder, improves digestion and circulation, and controls many pathogenic organisms.

Medicinal uses

Internally for depression, apathy, nervous exhaustion, headaches and migraines associated with nervous tension or feeling cold. Also poor circulation and digestive problems associated with anxiety. Externally used for rheumatism, arthritis, neuralgia, muscular injuries, wounds, dandruff, scurf and hair loss.

How to grow

Well-drained, ideally neutral to alkaline soil, in full sun, with shelter in cold areas. Propagate from cuttings or buy as plants any time of the year. Hardy shrub.

Chives

Culinary uses

Chives are especially good with potato and eggs. Leaves are used to garnish and flavour soups and salads and in soft cheese, omelettes and sauces. Flowers can also be used in salads.

Medicinal uses

Internally for colds and sore throats. Externally for earache.

How to grow

Rich well-drained soil in full sun. Plant in spring, fully hardy.

Coriander

Culinary uses

Leaves and leafstalks are used to flavour soups, salads, beans and curries. Seeds are an ingredient of curries, curry powder, pickles, pickling spices, baked foods, sausages and sauces.

Properties

Both seeds and leaves are rich in volatile oil that acts mainly on the digestive system, stimulating appetite, and relieving irritation. It is also an expectorant. The oil is fungicidal and bactericidal.

Medicinal uses

Internally used for minor digestive problems. Externally for joint pain.

How to grow

To be grown as an annual. Sow seed in spring in well-drained fertile soil in sun, however planting in shade can aid leaf production for salads.

Fennel

Culinary uses

Leaves are eaten in salads and as a garnish and flavouring, especially with olives and fish dishes. Leaf bases are eaten raw in salads or cooked as a vegetable. Whole cracked or ground seeds are used to flavour bread, biscuits, sausages and stuffings. Seeds and leaves can also be used to make herb tea.

Properties

A sweet, aromatic, diuretic herb that relieves digestive problems and reduces inflammation.

Medicinal uses

Internally for indigestion, wind, colic and urinary disorders. Externally as a mouthwash or gargle for gum disease and sore throats.

How to grow

Light, well-drained soil, neutral to alkaline soil in full sun. Grow from seed or plants in spring. Grow as a half-hardy annual.

Mint

Culinary uses

Leaves are widely used in flavouring, with peas and potatoes, for making mint sauce and jelly to accompany lamb. Also as an ingredient of herb teas, iced drinks, appetisers and salads.

Properties

An aromatic stimulant herb, which improves digestion and relieves spasms. Oil is less pungent than peppermint oil and is non-irritant.

Medicinal uses

Internally for colic, wind, indigestion, hiccups and feverish childhood illnesses.

How to grow

Plant into rich moist soil in sun or partial shade, sow from seed in spring or buy as plants, can be divided in spring. Fully hardy.

Basil

Culinary uses

Popular herb for Italian dishes basil makes a natural partner to tomato dishes. Good with spaghetti sauces and pizzas. Good for tomato salad and sauces and can also be used to season soups, minced beef and sausages and on vegetables such as beans, peppers and aubergines.

Properties

A restorative, warming aromatic herb that relaxes spasms, reduces fever, improves digestion and is an effective antibacterial action against infections. It has a mild sedative action.

Medicinal Uses

Internally for feverish illnesses, colds and influenza, poor digestion, nausea, abdominal cramps, gastro enteritis, migraine, insomnia, low spirits, anxiety and exhaustion. Externally for acne, loss of smell, insect stings and skin infections.

How to grow

A tender annual which cannot stand frosts. Sow seed in March or April and plant out in June in a well-drained sunny spot.

Parsley

Culinary uses

Leaves are used as a garnish and to flavour sauces, butter, dressings, stuffings and savoury dishes.

Properties

A bitter, aromatic, diuretic herb that relaxes spasms, reduces inflammation and clears toxins. It stimulates the digestion and uterus.

Medicinal uses

Internally used for menstrual complaints, oedema, cystitis, prostatitis, kidney stones, indigestion, colic, anorexia, anaemia, arthritis and rheumatism (roots and seeds).

How to grow

Rich well-drained neutral to alkaline soil in sun or partial shade. Propagation by seed from spring to late summer. Fully hardy.

Oregano

Culinary uses

Herb used in Italian, Greek and Mexican cooking, often used dried in strongly flavoured dishes in which ingredients such as chilli, garlic, tomatoes, onions, olives and wine predominate. Leaves and flower tops can be used in tea.

Properties

A pungent aromatic, antiseptic warming herb that relaxes spasms, increases perspiration, benefits the digestion, stimulates the uterus and acts as a mild expectorant.

Medicinal uses

Internally for colds, influenza, minor feverish illnesses, indigestion and stomach upsets.

Externally used in aromatherapy for bronchitis, asthma, arthritis and muscular pain. Can also be used to treat head-lice.

How to grow

Well-drained to dry, neutral to alkaline soil. Propagation by seed or division in spring.