

Bay Leaf, Bayberry, Sweet Bay

Family	Lauraceae
Botanical	Laurus nobilis
Parts Used	Leaves
USDA Hardiness	8A - 11
Light	Full Sun to partial shade
Soil	Well drained potting soil
Duration	Perennial



Propagation	Buy 6-8 inch starter plants. Propagated easily from cuttings. Soil pH requirements: 6.6 to 7.5 (neutral)
Water	Water regularly, do not overwater
Growing	Plant your Bay Laurel herb in a twelve-inch wide container that has good drainage but is slow to dry out in hot weather. It is a slow grower and tolerates being slightly pot bound. Use a good quality potting soil. Sweet Bay plants don't require much attention other than providing sufficient water, especially during hot weather. Also, don't forget to feed the plant with an occasional dose of a balanced organic fertilizer.

Medicinal Uses	Analgesic, Aromatic, Bitter, Emetic, Emmenagogue, Nervine and Stimulant
Benefits	The leaf of the plant can be boiled and the water can be used for treatment of various medical problems. The herbal tea, prepared using dried bay leaves, is also effective in treating digestive disorders. Both the fruit and the leaf contain essential oils that are used in treating arthritis, headaches, joint pains, and swelling.
Preparation	<p>Coughs & Cold: Placing a cloth soaked in water in which bay leaves have been boiled provides relief from cough, cold, bronchitis and chest infections.</p> <p>Aches & Pains: Essential Oil of bay leaf is massaged on sprained areas and for relieving headaches. The oil also provides relief from swellings, rheumatic and arthritic pain.</p> <p>Fever: Bay leaves infusion promotes sweating, breaking fever, and flu symptoms.</p> <p>Digestion: Bay leaves are used for treatment of digestive disorders. They reduce flatulence.</p> <p>Diabetes: A study was conducted by the Department of Human Nutrition, Pakistan, to test the effect of bay leaf on type 2 diabetes. Forty people with type 2 diabetes were chosen for the study. They were divided into four groups and each group was given different quantities of bay leaf. At the end of the 30-day study, it was observed that all the subjects showed a marked increase in serum glucose. The conclusion was that using bay leaf reduces risk of cardiovascular diseases and Type 2 diabetes.</p>

Fines Herbes

Culinary Uses

Fresh or dried bay leaves are used in cooking for their distinctive flavor and fragrance. The leaves are often used to flavor soups, stews, braises and pâtés in Mediterranean cuisine. The fresh leaves are very mild and do not develop their full flavor until several weeks after picking and drying. When dried, the fragrance is herbal, slightly floral, and somewhat similar to oregano and thyme.

Bay Leaf Mashed Potatoes

Ingredients:

3 pounds russet potatoes, peeled and quartered

Organic Bay Leaves

1 teaspoon salt

1/4 teaspoon White Pepper, Ground

2/3 cup hot milk

1/4 cup stick butter, cut into chunks

Directions:

1. Place potatoes and bay leaves in 4-quart saucepan. Add water to cover. Bring to boil. Reduce heat to low; cover and simmer 15 to 20 minutes or until potatoes are fork tender.
2. Drain and return potatoes to pan. Remove bay leaves. Add salt and white pepper. Mash with potato masher, gradually adding milk, then butter. Serve immediately.



Historical Facts

At one time, physicians were presented with laurel to impart to them the wisdom of Apollo and Aesculapius, the gods associated with healing and medicine. Interestingly enough, the Roman poet laureate, Ovid, passed on the oral legend that the amorous advances of Apollo were rejected by the nymph Daphne since she had been by affected by an arrow through the heart cast by Cupid. In order to protect her from Apollo's unwavering advances, her father, Peneus, turned her into a bay laurel tree.

Additional Tips

Nutrition Facts

Fresh leaves are very rich source of vitamin-C (ascorbic acid) is one of the powerful natural anti-oxidant that help remove harmful free radicals from the body. Ascorbic acid also has immune booster, wound healing and anti-viral effects.

Very good in folic acid; contain about 180 mg or 45% of daily-recommended values per 100 g. Folates are important in DNA synthesis and when given during the peri-conception period, they can help prevent neural tube defects in the baby.

Bay leaves are an excellent source of vitamin A; contain 6185 IU or 206% of recommended daily levels per 100 g. Vitamin A is a natural antioxidant and is essential for healthy visual sight. It is also required for maintaining mucus membranes and skin health.

The spice is indeed a very good source of many vitamins such as niacin, pyridoxine, pantothenic acid and riboflavin. These B-complex groups of vitamins help in enzyme synthesis, nervous system function, and regulating body metabolism. This noble spice is a good source of minerals like copper, potassium, calcium, manganese, iron, selenium, zinc and magnesium. Potassium is an important component of cell and body fluids that helps control heart rate and blood pressure. Manganese and copper are used by the body as co-factors for the antioxidant enzyme, superoxide dismutase. Iron is essential for red blood cell production and as a co-factor for cytochrome-oxidase enzymes.