

## Hyssop

Family	Hyssopus officinalis
Botanical	Lamiaceae
Parts Used	Dried aerial parts
USDA Hardiness	3A -11
Light	Full Sun
Soil	Well drained
Duration	Perennial



Propagation Soil pH requirements: 5 to 7 (alkaline).  
By dividing the rootball or seeds.

Water As needed, do not overwater

Growing Prune back in autumn after collecting seeds. Bees, butterflies, fireflies, and hummingbirds as well as certain moths and wasps enjoy the flowers of hyssop for their nectar. If you plant in a container make sure the pot is deep enough to accommodate a large root system. Sow seeds indoors or directly in the garden in early spring. Hyssop prefers full sun to partial shade with a well drained, even dry, soil. You can amend soil with organic matter. Sow seeds just beneath the surface, approximately ¼-inch deep. Germination generally takes between 14 and 21 days, but can take as long as a month, so be patient. Transplant if sown indoors after all threat of frost has passed. Space between 6 inches and 12 inches apart. You can also sow the seeds outdoors in late fall for spring germination. Hyssop usually grows to a height of 24 to 36 inches.

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Medicinal Uses Anti-spasmodic, expectorant, diaphoretic, sedative, carminative, anti-catarrhal, aromatic, hepatic, tonic and vulnerary.

Benefits Used in coughs, bronchitis and chronic catarrh. Diaphoretic properties for the common cold. Used in anxiety states, hysteria and petit mal (epilepsy).

Preparation Collect the flowering tops in late summer.  
Infusion:  
Pour a cup of boiling water on 1-2 teaspoons of the dried herb and infuse for 10-15 minutes. Drink 3 times a day.

The essential oil made from the leaves has antiseptic properties and are also used in perfumes.

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# Fines Herbes

## Culinary Uses

Hyssop has a slightly bitter minty flavour. The leaves can be sprinkled sparingly over salads or added to apple stews, pies or flans. A few leaves can be used in savoury dishes such as rich stews and in marinades. The flowers can be used as an attractive garnish and in salads.

This is a succulent rustic lunch or light supper. The aromatic, bitter flavor of the hyssop combined with the sweetness of the peppers and ripe tomatoes is delightful. Make sure you serve this with some crusty fresh bread so you can mop up the juices.

## Hyssop Baked Peppers

### Ingredients:

4 red bell peppers

3 cloves garlic

Salt

2 sprigs hyssop leaves, removed from the stems and finely chopped

Olive Oil

16 ripe cherry tomatoes

8 anchovy fillets

### Instructions:

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F

2. Halve the peppers lengthways, remove and discard the white core and seeds, then lay the peppers, cut side up, in a greased baking dish. They should fit snugly.

3. Peel the garlic, slice it finely and put a few slices in each halved pepper, together with a little salt, a pinch of hyssop leaves and 1 tbsp oil. (If you are using anchovies in olive oil, use this oil, as it adds extra flavor.) Halve the tomatoes and tuck them into the peppers. Bake in the oven until the peppers have almost collapsed and are full of juice.

4. Either drain the anchovies, if in oil, on paper towels, or if in brine, rinse and dry them. Roughly chop the anchovy fillets and stir 1 tsp (5 ml) into each of the peppers. Return to the oven for 10 minutes, then serve.



## Historical Facts

The name hyssop can be traced back almost unchanged through the Greek *hyssopos* and Hebrew *esob* meaning 'holy herb.' It is uncertain that *Hyssopus officinalis* is the same 'hyssop' referred to in the scriptures Scriptures (1 Kings 4.33; Ps. 51.7; John 19.29), however it was once regarded as a symbol of purification and as such was used in the ritual cleansing of churches, it was often planted in monastery gardens and was used in religious painting to symbolize humility. In the seventeenth century, it was used as a strewing herb in sick rooms, to deter the spread of infection and to cleanse lepers, as noted in the scriptures.

## Additional Tips

## Nutrition Facts

The Nutritional Value of Hyssop: Research has demonstrated that hyssop is extremely nutritious being an excellent source of antioxidant packed phytochemicals. These include a number of flavonoids such as limonene, caffeic acids, oleanolic acid and rosmarinic acid. This herb also contains the glycosides, hyssopin, camphene, pinanones and sabinene. The monoterpenes in hyssop include monoterpenols, sesquiterpenols and also tannins.

Flavonoids are non-essential nutrients which are found in the color pigments of plants. Generally speaking the brighter the color, the more beneficial the flavonoids. Flavonoid rich foods need to be consumed on a regular basis to obtain health benefits because, unlike vitamins, they are excreted after a few days. The flavonoids in hyssop leaves and flowers have anti-cancer, anti-inflammatory, anti-allergic and antiviral properties. Research suggests that drinking hyssop tea as part of a healthy

diet can help lower LDL cholesterol and may help protect against heart disease. Because of its high phenolic content and possible health benefits, hyssop is also sold as an herbal supplement.