

Fines Herbes

Lovage

Family	Apiaceae
Botanical	Levisticum officinale
Parts Used	Stalks, roots and leaves
USDA Hardiness	3A - 7B
Light	Sun to Partial Shade
Soil	Moist, Well drained
Duration	Perennial



Propagation	By dividing the rootball or from seed, direct sow outdoors in fall or sow indoors before last frost. Soil pH requirements: 6.1 (mildly acidic) to 7.8 (mildly alkaline).
Water	As needed, do not overwater
Growing	Divide the plant every 3-5 years depending upon expansion of the rootball. Likes cool growing conditions. Lovage looks a bit like celery but is in the carrot family. The plants may grow up to 6 feet and bears lacy thick green foliage. They grow 36 to 72 inches with a 32-inch spread. The base of the plant is comprised of thick celery-like stems with glossy green leaves. The yellow flowers are arranged in umbel type clusters, which produce seeds 1/2 inch long. Sun and well-drained soils are the key to growing lovage.

Medicinal Uses	AntiCancer, Antispasmodic, Aromatic, Carminative, Diaphoretic/sudorific, Diuretic, Emmenagogue, Nervine
Benefits	A standard infusion is sometimes used to induce menstruation. Use a standard infusion or decoction to treat colic, flatulence ("gas" or "wind"), indigestion and as a mild expectorant. A root decoction can also be used to treat sore throats and external ulcers, or added to bath water for skin problems.
Preparation	<p>Roots harvested for use in herbalism are generally collected from 3-year-old plants. Since these can be pretty large, you may wish to divide the plant, replanting part of it and using the remaining roots for medicine.</p> <p>Make a standard infusion using 1 ounce of dried leaves or 3 handfuls of fresh to 2.5 cups of boiling water. Allow to infuse for at least 15 minutes (up to 4 hours) then strain off the herb and discard.</p> <p>A decoction can be made using either the fruit or the grated root. Put 1 ounce2.5 cups of cold water. Bring to a boil and lower the heat to continue simmering until the liquid is reduced by half, then strain off the herb and discard.</p> <p>Dosage in either case is up to 1 cup a day, split into 3 doses.</p>

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Culinary Uses

I would take stalks and leaves of this plant, and use cooking twine to wrap around seafood/meats to grill out over the fire. Lovage is literally one of the most tastiest herbs out there! I can't say enough good things about it.. It tastes like cucumbers and nuts combined.. You can add it to raw to salads, mince it for sautes, or just wrap it around your veggies/meats when cooking out as stated before.

Looks like a giant celery plant and can be substituted for celery in almost any recipe. The hollow stems and seeds can be candied to make sweet confections.

Lovage, Caramelized-Onion and Potato Frittata

Potatoes and lovage are a natural pairing. Here, onions cooked to a dark brown balance the herb's pungency with caramelized sweetness. Total Time: 45 minutes Serves: 8

Ingredients:

6 small potatoes (about ½ pound)

5 tablespoons olive oil

4 tablespoons butter

2 cloves garlic, smashed

4 large yellow onions, thinly sliced

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

8 large eggs, room temperature

1 tablespoon lovage leaves, chopped, plus additional for garnish

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Rub potatoes with 1 tablespoon oil. Place on a baking sheet and roast 30 minutes. When potatoes are cool enough to handle, slice thinly crosswise. Set aside.

2. Meanwhile, in a 9-inch nonstick skillet, heat 2 tablespoons each oil and butter over medium heat. Add 1 clove garlic and cook until beginning to brown, about 2 minutes. Add onions and salt and pepper to taste. Sauté, stirring often, until darkly caramelized, 10-15 minutes. Use a slotted spoon to remove garlic and discard. Remove onion mixture from pan and set aside.

3. Preheat broiler to high. In a large bowl, whisk eggs. Stir in potatoes, onions and chopped lovage, and season with salt and pepper to taste.

4. Rinse and dry skillet. Place skillet over medium heat and add remaining butter and oil. When butter begins to foam, reduce heat to lowest possible setting. Add egg mixture and cook until set and only top surface of frittata is runny, 10-15 minutes. Set skillet under broiler until top is just set and only lightly browned, 30-60 seconds. Loosen edges of frittata with a spatula and slide onto a platter.

Sprinkle with chopped lovage. Serve warm or at room temperature.



Historical Facts

Originally from the Mediterranean area, lovage grew near the mountains of Greece and in the south of France. It was formerly used in medicine and cooking. Centuries ago lovage became established in Britain and was among the most cultivated medicinal herbs.

Additional Tips

Nutrition Facts

This herb is rich in vitamin C, B complex vitamin's and the antioxidant, quercetin. Quercetin is a bioflavonoid that acts as an anti-inflammatory and is believed to help prevent heart disease. The herb lovage is nature's third best source of quercetin, after green tea and capers.