

Catnip, Catmint

Family	Labiatae
Botanical	Neptea cataria
Parts Used	Leaves and flowering tops
USDA Hardiness	3A - 9B
Light	Full Sun to partial shade
Soil	Fertile and sandy
Duration	Perennial



Propagation Soil pH requirements: 6.1 to 7.8 (mildly alkaline).
From seed; sow indoors before last frost. Catnip is easily propagated by seed, stem cuttings, or rootball division.

Water Water regularly, do not overwater

Growing Great addition in a butterfly garden. Good for well drained containers and hanging baskets. Catnip grows to a height of three or four feet, and features downy, light green foliage with small lavender flowers that grow on spikes up to five inches long.

Catnips grow well in almost any soil, but does best in a moderately rich loam that is well-draining. It's aroma increases when grown in sandy soil or via the hydroponic method. It will grow acceptably in either sun or shade.

Water them regularly. Cut out last years spent stems in early spring, which creates room for new ones. Cutting the plants completely down after the first bloom set will allow enough time for the plant to completely regrow and bloom again.

Medicinal Uses Carminative, anti-spasmodic, diaphoretic, sedative and nervine.

Benefits Traditional cold and flu remedy, used in any feverish condition especially in bronchitis. Eases stomach upsets, dyspepsia, flatulence and colic. Remedy for diarrhea in children and relaxing to the nerves.

Preparation Collect the leaves and flowering tops early summer and early fall. Pour a cup of boiling water onto 2 teaspoons of the dried herb and infuse for 10-15 minutes. Do not boil. Sip throughout the day. Can be combined with Boneset, Elder, Yarrow or Cayenne in colds.

Fines Herbes

Culinary Uses

Till the 13th century, catnip was a very common herb in kitchen gardens in England and there was a time when the leaves of this herb were employed to rub meats prior to cooking them. In addition, catnip leaves were also sliced finely and showered on green salads. Try cutting a few catnip leaves and adding them to your salads and experience their delightful flavour. You may also add freshly chopped or even dried leaves of this herb to stews, soups as well as nourishing sauces.

Secret Recipe for Awesome Spaghetti Sauce

IMPORTANT: This recipe can easily be halved! I just like to make a ton so I can freeze it.

Ingredients:

5 pounds Ground Beef
3 Tablespoons Olive Oil
2 whole Large Yellow Onions, Diced
2 whole Green Bell Pepper, Seeded And Diced
6 cloves Garlic, Minced
1 cup White Wine (or Low Sodium Beef Broth If You Prefer)
2 cans 28 Ounce Crushed Tomatoes
1 can (14 Oz. Size) Crushed Tomatoes
1 can (small, 4-ounce) Tomato Paste
2 teaspoons dried Catnip
2 teaspoons dried Oregano
2 teaspoons dried Thyme
4 whole Bay Leaves
2 Tablespoons Sugar
2 teaspoons Kosher Salt
1/2 teaspoon Crushed Red Pepper (optional)
1/4 cup Finely Minced Fresh Parsley (or 3 Tablespoons Parsley Flakes), More To Taste
1 whole Rind From One Wedge Parmesan (optional)
1/2 cup Grated Parmesan Cheese (optional)
2 pounds Spaghetti, Cooked Al Dente And Tossed With Olive Oil
Extra Minced Parsley, For Serving
Extra Parmesan Cheese, For Serving

Directions:

In a large pot over medium-high heat, brown the ground beef until totally browned. Remove meat from pot with a slotted spoon and put into a bowl. Set aside.

Discard any grease in pot, but do not clean the pot. Drizzle in olive oil. When it is heated, throw in the diced onion and diced bell pepper. Stir it around for 1 1/2 minutes, then add the garlic. Stir and cook for an additional minute.

Pour in the wine and allow it to bubble up and reduce for about 1 1/2 minutes.

Add crushed tomatoes and tomato paste. Stir to combine, then add catnip, oregano, thyme, sugar, salt, bay leaves, and crushed red pepper (if using). Stir, then add cooked ground beef and stir to combine. Place the lid on the pot and allow to simmer for 1 hour, stirring occasionally. Add a little water or some low-sodium broth if it needs more liquid.

After an hour, add the minced parsley and the rind from a wedge of Parmesan (or grated Parmesan if you prefer--or both!) Stir to combine, then put the lid back on and allow it to simmer for another 30 minutes or so. Discard bay leaves before serving.



Fines Herbes

Serve a big bowl of oiled noodles and spaghetti sauce so guests can serve themselves. Top each serving with minced parsley and grated Parmesan (or Parmesan shavings) and serve with a big piece of garlic-cheese bread.

Historical Facts

Catnip originated in Europe and Asia. It was used by Roman cooks and doctors, and records from England and France show that catnip was used as a stimulating hot drink before black tea became popular. European settlers brought catnip to the United States in the late 18th century, introducing it to the Native Americans. There are records of the use of catnip from 13 different Native American tribes, who primarily used the herb for treating children. It was used for colic, treating diarrhea, colds and stomach aches.

Additional Tips

Nutrition Facts

Here are just some of the nutrients that the Catnip plant has to offer : calcium, chromium, iron, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, potassium, selenium, silicon & zinc. Not to mention a host of phytochemicals (anti-oxidants found in plants that have protective or disease-fighting properties).