

Peppermint

Family	Lamiaceae
Botanical	<i>Mentha x piperita</i>
Parts Used	Leaves
USDA Hardiness	3A - 7B
Light	Full Sun
Soil	Well drained
Duration	Perennial



Propagation	Start from seed or root division. Peppermint is a sterile hybrid derived from a cross between <i>Mentha aquatica</i> and <i>Mentha spicata</i> .
Water	As needed, do not overwater
Growing	Spreads easily and prefers moist, rich soil. Best to keep in a container or contained garden bed to prevent it from taking over your whole garden. Start with roots or soft stem cuttings.

Medicinal Uses	Antispasmodic, carminative, diaphoretic, analgesic (externally), stimulant, disinfectant and antispasmodic.
Benefits	Eases general indigestion, flatulence, colic, irritable bowel syndrome, nausea, vomiting, cold and flu, stings and bites and itchy skin.
Preparation	Essential oil for topical uses such as bites, stings and itchy skin. Infusion of the leaves: Use 1/2 oz. peppermint and 2 cups boiling water. Infuse for 10-15 minutes and strain. Add the juice of 1 lemon. Cool in the refrigerator. Pour over a glass of ice and drink freely to avoid the debilitating effects of heat or indigestion.

Fines Herbes

Culinary Uses

Mint is very popular in Middle Eastern dishes, such as tabouli. Mint complements certain kinds of meat, especially poultry and lamb. In England, lamb is traditionally served with a mint sauce.

Fresh Strawberry and Mint Leaf Salad with Poppy seed Dressing

Ingredients:

- 1 cup Fresh strawberries sliced
- 2 cups baby arugula
- 8 fresh mint leaves
- 1/2 cup fresh baby spinach or watercress

Poppy Seed Salad dressing:

- 1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1/4 cup fresh lime juice
- 1 1/2 tablespoons poppy seeds
- 1/2 teaspoon sugar
- salt & freshly ground pepper to taste
- Feta cheese crumble (optional)

Directions:

Rinse strawberries and dry with a paper towel before slicing. Refrigerate towel dried strawberries.

Mix olive oil, lime juice, poppy seeds, sugar, salt and pour all ingredients into a jar and shake until well mixed. Refrigerate and shake before serving.

Arrange greens, sliced strawberries and feta cheese on a platter or serving dish.

Shake and pour dressing a few minutes before serving.

Add freshly ground pepper.



Historical Facts

Peppermint is thought to have originated in Northern Africa and the Mediterranean. In the Ebers Papyrus, an ancient Egyptian medical text dating to 1550 BC, mint is listed as calming to stomach pains. Mint was so valued in Egypt that it was used as a form of currency. In the Bible (Luke 11:39) Jesus tells the Pharisees: But woe unto you, Pharisees! For ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

In Greek mythology, Minthe was a river nymph in the Cocytus River (one of the five rivers of Hades). When Hades was driving his golden chariot, he came upon Minthe and was about to seduce her when his wife Persephone caught them. Persephone then turned Minthe into a lowly mint plant that people would walk upon. Mint supposedly got its pungent, sweet smell when Hades softened the spell so that when people walked upon his lover they would smell her sweetness. Peppermint gets the descriptor piperita from the particular peppery, pungency that distinguishes it from other members of the mint family.

Additional Tips

Contraindicated in high quantities during pregnancy due to emmenagogue effect.

Nutrition Facts

An excellent source of minerals like potassium, calcium, iron, manganese and magnesium. 100 g fresh herb provides 569 mg of potassium. Potassium is an important component of cell and body fluids that helps control heart rate and blood pressure. Manganese and copper works as co-factors for the antioxidant enzyme, superoxide-dismutase.

Further, it is rich in many antioxidant vitamins, including vitamin A, beta carotene, vitamin-C and vitamin E. The leaves of mint also contain many important B-complex vitamins like folates, riboflavin and pyridoxine (vitamin B-6); and the herb is an excellent source of vitamin-K.