

Spearmint, Kentucky Colonel

Family	Lamiaceae
Botanical	Mentha spicata
Parts Used	Leaves
USDA Hardiness	4A - 11
Light	Full Sun to Light Shade
Soil	Well Drained
Duration	Tender Perennial



Propagation Root or stem cutting.
Soil pH requirements: 5.6 (acidic) to 7.5 (neutral).

Water As needed, do not overwater

Growing After your plants are established, consider mulching to help keep the roots cool, and the soil moist. Some, for those same reasons, will plant the entire pot or container in the ground. If you do this, you will want to leave a couple of inches of the pot sticking out of the ground. Also, keep a careful eye on the mint, and keep its stems trimmed well. When the stems reach the ground outside the container, they tend to root and spread. As with most container grown plants, keep an eye on the soil so that it doesn't dry out. Nor do you want it soggy, as that invites fungus diseases and a host of other problems. Plan to fertilize once a month with a liquid fertilizer. If you live in a gardening zone with relatively mild winters, you should be able to mulch your pot and place it in a sheltered location, and have it come back again in the spring. Or, you can take the plant indoors to a sunny windowsill for a winter's supply of mint. It may die back a little at first, but it should come back shortly.

Medicinal Uses Antioxidant, antifungal

Benefits Great for stomach aches.

Preparation Fresh Mint Tea
Ingredients:
4-5 stalks of fresh mint, with stems
4 cups boiling water
Sugar or honey, if desired
Directions:
1. Bring 4 cups of water to a boil.
2. While water is boiling, fill a 4-6 cup teapot to the brim with hot water from the tap, and let it sit until the tea water boils.
3. When the tea water is boiling, empty the now-warm teapot. Roll the mint between your palms until it is slightly crushed. Place in teapot.
4. Pour boiling water over the crushed mint, cover the teapot, and let it steep for 5 minutes.
5. Pour into your favorite teacup, inhale deeply, and enjoy!

Fines Herbes

Culinary Uses

This is the mint used to make Mint Juleps at the Kentucky Derby. Spearmint leaves can be used fresh, dried, or frozen. They can also be preserved in salt, sugar, sugar syrup, alcohol, or oil. The leaves lose their aromatic appeal after the plant flowers. It can be dried by cutting just before, or right (at peak) as the flowers open, about one-half to three-quarters the way down the stalk (leaving smaller shoots room to grow).

Mint Julep yield: Makes 1 drink

Ingredients:

1 scant ounce minted simple syrup

2 cups crushed ice

2 ounces bourbon (such as Woodford Reserve)

Fresh spearmint sprig, for garnish

Directions:

To highball glass or silver Julep cup, add minted simple syrup, then 1 cup crushed ice, bourbon, and splash of water. Add enough of remaining ice to almost fill glass. Stir well and garnish with mint sprig.



Historical Facts

The first recorded use of *Mentha spicata* dates as far back as 400 BC. A native species to the mediterranean region, spearmint was collected throughout the Roman empire and valued for its pleasant aroma.

Before refrigeration, crushed spearmint was added to milk to keep it from curdling. Modern recipes ranging from savory to sweet call for the refreshing flavor of spearmint. The menthol contained in the leaves tricks the tongue into feeling like it came into contact with something cold. American Southerners popularized the practice of adding a sprig to iced tea or a mint julep to increase the refreshment quality of a cold drink.

Additional Tips

Nutrition Facts

The herb parts are also very good in minerals like potassium, calcium, manganese, iron (148% of RDA), and magnesium. Iron is required for enzymes in cellular metabolism and synthesis of hemoglobin. Potassium is an important component of cell and body fluids that helps control heart rate and blood pressure. Manganese is used by the body as a co-factor for the antioxidant enzyme superoxide dismutase.

Further, the herb is also rich in many antioxidant vitamins, including vitamin A (provides 4054 IU or 135% of RDA), beta-carotene, vitamin C, folates (26% of RDA), vitamin B-6 (pyridoxine), riboflavin and thiamin.