



EDIBLE  
GARDENING  
SERIES

# Basil

Basil is the queen of Italian herbs. It is grown for its fragrant tasty leaves that can be added raw to salads, sandwiches or in cooked dishes. Basil is an annual herb. Its leaves are commonly used in cooking, but the flower buds are also edible.

Basil has extremely aromatic foliage. It has a delightful array of flavors from slightly lemony mint of Sweet Basil to cinnamon and licorice. The foliage color spans from rich green to deep purple. Basil is considered a companion plant. It is planted to help repel aphids, mites and tomato hornworms.

## EXPOSURE

Full sun to part shade.

## PLANTING

Plant with **Gardner & Bloome Harvest Supreme** and **Dr. Earth Vegetable Fertilizer**. Space your basil plants 10 to 12 inches apart. Do not plant basil outdoors until night time temperatures are consistently above 50°F.

## WATERING

As necessary to maintain even soil moisture.

## FERTILIZING

To encourage a quick re-sprouting after a harvest fertilize with a water soluble fertilizer.

## USES

Basil is critical in everything from pesto to Indian and Southeast Asian cuisine. Used fresh or dry, its leaves lend a pleasant, mildly sweet flavor to sauces and cooked dishes of all sorts. Drink basil tea as an after dinner drink to aid digestion and expel gas. It is good for stomach cramps and vomiting. Use basil oil for aromatherapy as it helps with mental fatigue.

## HARVESTING

Basil is a cut and come again herb. By pinching off sprigs as needed or by cutting plants back by a third every 3 weeks or so through the summer. The best leaves are from younger stems that have not yet flowered. You will want to prevent your basil from blooming for as long as possible by harvesting or pinching off the top sets of leaves as soon as the plant reaches about 6 inches tall. If the plant sets flowers, it's on its way to going to seed and will not be bushing out with leaves. Once basil goes to seed existing leaves lessen in flavor.

## VARIETIES

### • Genovese

Larger foliage than Sweet basil, and having a great flavor

### • Cinnamon

Green foliage, purple flowers and a spicy cinnamon scent and flavor.

Please turn the page for more information. ➡

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• **Lemon**

Fresh lemony tang. Grows to 15 inches tall. Leaves are good in vegetable dishes, salads, fruit salads and with fish. Adds a great lemon taste to your tea.

• **Sweet Basil**

Grows to 18 inches tall. Use leaves in salads and for making pesto, and tomato sauce. Grows 12 to 18 inches tall.

• **Pesto perpetuo**

Light green and white variegated foliage. Non-flowering basil that can grow 48 inches tall.

• **Siam Queen**

Great for authentic Thai cuisine. The young shoots can be harvested regularly over a period of 4 months. Especially good in fish, and beef dishes, the leaves can also be used raw as a side dish and are an important ingredient in spicy soups and curries.

• **Purple Ruffles**

Deep purple leaves add rich color to salads and herb vinegars, and also make beautiful garnishes.

• **Licorice**

Leaves have a spicy licorice smell. Also known as anise basil, it offers a licorice like taste with a hint of clove.

**BASIL PESTO**

Hand chopping all ingredients and not blending them is key because this prevents the ingredients from becoming a completely homogenized emulsion or paste. When you dress pasta with a pesto that has been hand chopped, the minuscule flecks of basil will separate from the olive oil in places to get a definition between ingredients, and bright flavors pop. When cutting basil, be sure to use a sharp knife.

- 1 large bunch of basil leaves, washed & dried
- 3 medium cloves of garlic
- 1 small handful of raw pine nuts
- Roughly ¾ cup parmesan cheese, loosely packed and freshly grated
- A few tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil

Start chopping the garlic along with about a third of the basil leaves. Once this is loosely chopped, add more basil. Chop some more, add the rest of the basil and the garlic, and chop some more. At this point, the basil and garlic should be a very fine mince. Add half the pine nuts, chop, add the rest of the pine nuts, and chop. Add the parmesan cheese in two stages and chop. In the end, you want a chop so fine you can press all the ingredients into pesto "cake." Transfer the "cake" to a small bowl and add the olive oil. Set aside or place in refrigerator until you are ready to use it. Just before serving, give it a quick stir to incorporate some of the oil into the basil.