

## Basil, Sweet\*

*Considering Medicinal values, Basil is on top of all herbal medicines.*



**Description---**Common or Sweet Basil which is used in medicine and also for culinary purposes world-over, is a hairy, labiates plant, growing about 3 feet high. The leaves, grayish-green beneath and dotted with dark oil cells, are opposite, 1 inch long and 1/3 inch broad, stalked and peculiarly smooth, soft and cool to the touch, and if slightly bruised exhale a delightful scent of cloves.

There are several varieties, differing in the size, shape, odor and color of the leaves. The Common Basil has very dark green leaves, the curled-leaved has short spikes of flowers, the narrow-leaved smells like Fennel, another has a scent of citron and another a tarragon scent, one species has leaves of three colors, and another 'studded' leaves.

**Holistic Value--**In India the Basil plant is sacred to both God Krishna and God Vishnu, and is cherished in every Hindu house. Probably on account of its virtues, in disinfecting, and vivifying malarial air, it first became inseparable from Hindu houses in India as the protecting spirit of the family. The strong aromatic scent of the leaves is very much like cloves. Every good Hindu goes to his rest with a Basil leaf on his breast. This is his passport to Paradise.

**Cultivation---**Basil dies down every year in this country, so that the seeds have to be sown annually. If in a very warm sheltered spot, seeds may be sown in the open, about the last week in April, but they are a long time coming up, and it is preferable to sow in a hot bed, about the end of March, and remove to a warm border in May, planting 10 inches to a foot apart. Basil flourishes best in a rich soil.

**Part Used Medicinally---**The whole herb, both fresh and dried, gathered in July.

**Medicinal Uses---** "Holy" Basil has largely been overlooked in the West, despite being one of the most esteemed botanicals in Ayurvedic medicine. Traditionally, the leaves of Basil have been used in the treatment of colds, cough, asthma, fevers, dyspepsia, liver disorders, and in the prevention of influenza, provide benefits in the treatment of type II diabetes and hypertension. Dried basil leaves are Immuno-stimulating (T cell populations and antibodies), fever-reducing, pain inhibiting, and anti-inflammatory. An infusion of the green herb in boiling water is good for all obstructions of the internal organs, arrests vomiting and allays nausea. The seeds have been reckoned efficacious against the poison of serpents, both taken internally and laid upon the wound. They are also said to cure warts.

Active constituents of Basil include ursolic acid which is credited for a number of activities of particular importance to the herb.

**Pricing** — prices of sweet basil differ from place to place and vary as per availability, still the current bulk prices offered by big companies are

Green organic leaves: 7.5\$ / Lb.

300 seeds: 2 \$

Dried leaves: 4\$ / oz.

Article-2.

(Dr. Subodh K. Singh, Lisa Colombe, Project NRE, SGU ranch)