



## *The Herb Society of America* Promising Plants Profiles

### ***Origanum xmajoricum* 'Hilltop'**

**Genus:** *Origanum*

**Specific Epithet:** *xmajoricum*

**Common Name:** marjoram

**Cultivar Name:** 'Hilltop' is used but is not an official cultivar name

**Family:** Lamiaceae

**Form:** perennial

**Hardiness Zone:** 7

**Height:** 18-24"

**Soil:** well-drained soil

**Sun:** full sun



**Uses:** culinary, ornamental

In the 1960's Rex Talbert brought me a small plant he purchased from Redwood City Seed. He had noticed that it looked different than all of the rest of the oreganos, which were obviously *Origanum vulgare* subsp. *vulgare*. It also naturally smelled different and better, i.e. somewhat but not quite like sweet marjoram. Much later, it was identified by Art Tucker as *O. xmajoricum*. We grew it for many years sharing or selling the plants as "Rex's Oregano." The tornado of 1983 destroyed every vestige of our favorite oregano. An *O. xmajoricum* 'Italian' was appearing by now on the market. The plants looked like our *O. xmajoricum* and grew like it, but lacked something in the translation of the aroma, and it seemed hotter to the tongue. I decided we had lost our wonderful-smelling *O. xmajoricum*. In the spring of 2000 a long time friend and HSA member, Libby Winston, drove in with a pickup load of gallon containers. She said, "You gave this to me 27 years ago and I needed to thin it out. Do you want them?" She had my long lost oregano! This shows one of the valid reasons for sharing plants! Needless to say we planted all of them in gardens that are not near the *O. xmajoricum* 'Italian' so that we don't get them mixed up. I labeled them *O. xmajoricum* 'Hilltop' as a working moniker until Dr. Tucker finishes the testing on both oreganos. We then shall see whether they are truly different or if it is a figment of my imagination and/or nose!

– Madalene Hill, Promising Plants Presentation, 2003

Photo by Gwen Barclay

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