

Did You Know?



Savory, *Satureja* spp.

- The original botanical name of most savories is *Satureja*. Though still commonly called a savory, many once in this genus, now belong to the genera *Micromeria*, *Clinopodium*, *Calamintha*, and *Acinos*.
- The botanical name *Satureja* was given to the plant by Pliny the Elder and some say that it is a reference to the mythological link of its use by satyrs to increase their sexual stamina. Others say that it is a derivation of the ancient word za'atar, which is a name applied to many oregano/thyme scented plants of the eastern Mediterranean.
- Savory, due to its perception as an aphrodisiac, has long been used in love potions.
- In the language of flowers savory stands for "mental powers".
- The name savory comes from the Latin word *satura*, meaning "satiated".
- Savory is known as the "bean herb" (*bohnenkraut* in German) because it both enhances the flavor of beans and helps in their digestion, thus decreasing the flatulence often associated with these and other legumes.
- The two main culinary savories are summer and winter savory. Summer savory (*Satureja hortenensis*) is an annual and is the most used culinary savory. Winter savory (*Satureja montana*) is an evergreen perennial that is a good substitute for summer savory, but it is notably stronger in flavor.
- In general, most savory plants prefer to grow in full sun with a loose, well-drained soil.
- Savory is an underutilized herb that could easily be a possible substitute in recipes, especially for thyme, but also with other pungent herbs such as rosemary and oregano.
- "Vinegar, flavored with savory and other aromatic herbs, was used by the Romans in the same manner as mint sauce is by us." -Maude Grieve, 1931
- Traditionally, savory has been one of the five main herbs in the popular dried herbal blend known as Herbes de Provence. The other herbs are marjoram, rosemary, thyme, and oregano. Lavender is also added to some blends, but this is a relatively new trend.
- Savories are highly attractive to bees when in bloom and can be nice plants to put around fruit plants that bloom at the same time or as nectar plants around bee hives.

- In general, the savories are not notable for their medicinal aspects. They tend to have anti-bacterial, anti-fungal and antioxidant effects (mainly due to the content of the phenols, carvacrol, and thymol) but none in particular are used as herbal medicine.
- “Both the old authorities and modern gardeners agree that a sprig of either of the savories rubbed on wasp and bee stings give instant relief.” -Maude Grieve, 1931

For more information on growing and using savory check with The Herb Society of America’s *Essential Guide to Savory* located on The HSA website.

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