

DID YOU Know...

COMMON SAGE / *SALVIA OFFICINALIS*



- One of over 800 *Salvia* species, *Salvia officinalis* is the one with culinary significance.
- The genus name *Salvia* come from the Latin *salvere*, “to save” or “to be in good health”
- Fertility treatments were the medicinal uses for sage from the Roman Empire to the 18th century.
- Sage has been attributed to wisdom, long life, and improved memory.
- In the Victorian language of herbs, Sage symbolized esteem, youth, friendship, good health, salvation and happy home
- Greeks and Romans believed sage symbolized domestic virtue
- Sage was used to treat illnesses ranging from palsy, liver disease, epilepsy, throat inflammation and fevers in the Middle Ages. It was also considered a cure for warts, snake bites and perspiration.
- Throughout history, sage was used to aid digestion, as a mouth wash, hair rinse, in a tisane to lesson sore throats and coughs, as an insect repellent.
- In the 16th century, sage was introduced to North America and was popular in pancake, tea and bread recipes as well as butters
- Sage was the most popular herb in the United States until World War II
- It has been said that if sage flourishes in a home garden, it is a sign that the wife is in charge of the household. If sage thrives and flourishes in the garden, the garden owner’s business with thrive and flourish as well.

CULINARY TIPS

- Dried sage is powerfully strong and should be used sparingly
- Fresh sage can be added alone to sandwiches such as grilled cheese or combined with other strong fresh or dried herbs such as bay, thyme, oregano, rosemary, summer and winter savory in soups and stews
- Flash fry large leaves, such as the large leafed ‘Berggarten’ variety for about 30 seconds, cool and crumble for a garnish
- Pour boiling water over 1 tablespoon of fresh or 1 teaspoon of dried sage and steep for 5 minutes for sage tea. Add honey to taste and serve warm or cold.
- Use sage as a base for herb tea, combining it with dried fruit or other herbs such as chamomile, fennel, lemon verbena, pineapple sage and spearmint or fruit mints.
- Enhance roast turkey, chicken or pork by placing fresh sage leaves under loosened skin

GROWING TIPS

- Flavor as well as hardiness varies widely amongst the different varieties of sage
- *S. officinalis* 'Bergarten' and the purple leafed variety 'Purpurascens' are known to be flavorful and hardy varieties
- *S. officinalis* 'Aurea' and 'Tricolor' are milder in flavor
- *S. officinalis* 'White Dalmation' is a variety selected for commercial production due to its clean aroma and flavor.
- Full sun and well-drained soil are the preferred environment for garden sage
- Mulch more tender varieties such as 'Tricolor' to improve hardiness in marginal areas

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES:

Salvia - *Herb of the Year 2001*, Herb society of America / Tidewater Unit Study Group