

Did You Know?



Lovage, *Levisticum officinale*

- The leaves and seeds of lovage are often used as a substitute for celery. The flavor has been described as celery-like, but stronger, with notes of parsley.
- This hardy perennial grows 3-6' tall with hollow stems and compound leaves. It is related to parsley, dill and angelica.
- The yellow flowers of lovage are arranged in umbels and grow on tall stems. Bees are attracted to the flowers, the larva of black swallowtail butterflies will feed on the leaves.
- Lovage leaves are used for flavoring, the seeds are also flavorful resembling fennel, celery or caraway seeds, and the roots are eaten as a vegetable.
- Lovage grows best in full sun to partial shade, and in rich, moist and well-drained soil.
- Historical medicinal use of lovage dates back to early Greeks where they chewed the stems to relieve gas and indigestion, among other uses.
- Other historical medicinal uses of lovage included aiding digestion, treating nausea and curing jaundice, preventing kidney stones, as an antiseptic, healing boils and migraines.
- Lovage was used as a salt substitute during World War I and II in many European countries.
- As one might guess by the name, lovage has been used as an ingredient in love potions.
- The English herbalist Nicholas Culpeper noted that a tincture made from the leaves removed freckles.
- Colonial Americans brought lovage with them from England. It was consumed as a tea to cure aches and pains.
- Young leaves are the sweetest while older leaves mature to a bitter flavor.
- Among the culinary uses, leaves are added to soups, stews, salads and chicken dishes.
- Crushed lovage leaves rubbed around the rim of a salad bowl will leave behind flavor for the salad that follows.
- Lovage has high quercetin (just less than green tea and capers) and is valued for its antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties.
- Tanqueray Lovage Gin incorporates lovage in its flavor profile. Lovage simple syrup can be used in cocktails or mocktails to make a version of a gimlet, among others.

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