Sweet Basil

Ocimum basilicum

Height: 18 inches

Spread: 12 inches

Spacing: 10 inches

Sunlight: ○

Hardiness Zone: (annual)



Sweet Basil flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Sweet Basil foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Edible Qualities

Sweet Basil is an annual herb that is commonly grown for its edible qualities. The fragrant oval light green leaves are usually harvested from early summer to early fall. The leaves have a potent taste.

The leaves are most often used in the following ways:

- Fresh Eating
- Cooking
- Seasoning

Planting & Growing

Sweet Basil will grow to be about 18 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 12 inches. When grown in masses or used as a bedding plant, individual plants should be spaced approximately 10 inches apart. This fast-growing annual will normally live for one full growing season, needing replacement the following year.

This plant is typically grown in a designated herb garden. It should only be grown in full sunlight. It prefers to grow in average to moist conditions, and shouldn't be allowed to dry out. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is not originally from North America.

Sweet Basil is a good choice for the edible garden, but it is also well-suited for use in outdoor pots and containers. It is often used as a 'filler' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination, providing the canvas against which the larger thriller plants stand out. Note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.