Clove Basil

Ocimum gratissimum



Clove Basil foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 18 inches

Spread: 15 inches

Spacing: 12 inches

Sunlight:

Hardiness Zone: (annual)

Other Names: African Basil

Description:

An upright, dense variety that is a common culinary herb in West Africa and the Caribbean; pale pink and white flowers with purple calyces rise up in mid-summer; great for mixed containers, herb gardens, and annual beds

Edible Qualities

Clove Basil is an annual herb that is typically grown for its edible qualities, although it does have ornamental merits as well. The fragrant pointy light green leaves are usually harvested from early summer to early fall. The leaves have a distinctive taste and a pleasant fragrance.

The leaves are most often used in the following ways:

- Fresh Eating
- Cooking
- Seasoning
- Sauces

Planting & Growing

Clove Basil will grow to be about 15 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 15 inches. When grown in masses or used as a bedding plant, individual plants should be spaced approximately 12 inches apart. This fast-growing annual will normally live for one full growing season, needing replacement the following year.

This plant is quite ornamental as well as edible, and is as much at home in a landscape or flower garden as it is 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. It can be propagated by cuttings.

Clove 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 a mass of flowers and foliage 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.