Russian Oregano

Origanum vulgare ssp. gracile



Russian Oregano in bloom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 18 inches

Spread: 18 inches

Spacing: 16 inches

Sunlight:

Hardiness Zone: 4

Description:

Grown primarily for culinary use and noted for its spicy, pungent flavor; abundant white to pink flowers in mid summer; also used as an ornamental plant in gardens or containers

Edible Qualities

Russian Oregano is a perennial herb that is typically grown for its edible qualities, although it does have ornamental merits as well. The fragrant oval dark green leaves are usually harvested from late spring to late summer. The leaves have a pungent taste and a distinctive fragrance.

The leaves are most often used in the following ways:

- Cooking
- Seasoning
- Sauces

Features & Attributes

Russian Oregano's attractive small fragrant oval leaves remain dark green in color throughout the season on a plant with a mounded habit of growth.

This is an herbaceous perennial herb with a mounded form. It brings an extremely fine and delicate texture to the garden composition and should be used to full effect. This is a relatively low maintenance plant, and should be cut back in late fall in preparation for winter. It is a good choice for attracting bees and butterflies to your yard, but is not particularly attractive to deer who tend to leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Aside from its primary use as an edible, Russian Oregano is sutiable for the following landscape applications;

- Border Edging
- General Garden Use
- Groundcover
- Herb Gardens
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Russian Oregano will grow to be about 16 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 18 inches. When grown in masses or used as a bedding plant, individual plants should be spaced approximately 16 inches apart. Its foliage tends to remain dense right to the ground, not requiring facer plants in front. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 5 years. As an herbaceous perennial, this plant will usually die back to the crown each winter, and will regrow from the base each spring. Be careful not to disturb the crown in late winter when it may not be readily seen!

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 dry to average moisture levels with very well-drained soil, and will often die in standing water. It is considered to be drought-tolerant, and thus makes an ideal choice for a low-water garden or xeriscape application. 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.

Russian Oregano 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 canvas of foliage against which the 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.