

Basil

Basil (*Ocimum basilicum*, unless otherwise noted), is a tender herb that grows as an annual in Wisconsin. Prized for its strong, pungent, sweet aroma, it is used fresh or dried in cooking. The essential oils in basil give it distinct flavors such as cinnamon, clove, anise, and lemon. Basil is very sensitive to the cold and does best in hot, dry conditions. Excessive moisture can cause fungal diseases. Basil is excellent for outdoor or container gardening. Continually harvesting the leaves discourages flowering and increases the overall yields.

'A Grande Foglie Valentino'

Color: green

Height: 24"

Italian basil has large aromatic leaves, very fragrant and tasty.

Dressings and sauces.

'Ararat'

Color: bicolor

Height: 18"

Striking medium-sized foliage is green with purple.

Strong sweet flavor with licorice overtone.

Salads, pestos, tomato dishes and as a garnish. Also ornamental.

'Aromatto'

Color: purple

Height: 18"

Produces purple-green leaves and flowers. Doesn't wilt as quickly as other varieties when cut. Slightly spicy aroma and flavor.

Pesto, Italian dishes, ornamental.

'Cinnamon'

Color: green

Height: 30"

This Mexican cultivar has stems that are purple-red with 2" long cinnamon scented leaves.

Fresh or dried in tomato dishes, pasta sauce, soups or brew for tea.

'Dark Opal'

Color: purple

Height: 24"

1962 AAS winner, bred at the Univ. of Connecticut to have the darkest purple leaves. Beautiful deep purple 2" leaves are very fragrant and tasty.

Garnish, in salads and flavored vinegar.

'Genovese'

Color: green

Height: 24"

Italian heirloom, tender, fragrant, large (2") dark green leaves. Tall uniform plants are slow to bolt.

Considered best for pesto and garlic based dishes.

'Greek'

Color: green

Height: 9"

Heirloom basil is compact with small (less than 1/2" long) fragrant leaves, globe-shaped plant.

Best in rice or grain dishes. Grow as an edging or in pots.

'Key Lime'

Color: green

Height: 24"

Narrow bright green foliage has tropical fresh lime scent.

Seafood, pasta, salads, poultry, marinades, vinegar, jellies.

'Lemon'

Color: green

Height: 18"

From Northwest India. Attractive, spreading, silver-green plant. Leaves have lemony aroma.

Potpourris, tea, chicken or fish dishes, vinegars, sorbet.

'Lettuce Leaf'

Color: green

Height: 24"

Heirloom from the 1880's. Very large succulent leaves with a strong spicy scent. High yields.

Perfect for pesto because of abundant yields of large leaves. Good with garlic, tomatoes, peppers, fish, eggs and chicken, in salads.

'Magical Michael'

Color: green

Height: 18"

This 2002 AAS winner has aromatic green leaves and purple/white flowers. Beautiful and floriferous.

Young leaves are used for cooking, also as an ornamental.

'Mammoth Sweet'

Color: green

Height: 36"

Large yellow-green leaves are slightly puckered. Easy to pick.

Use large leaves for culinary wrapping, sandwiches, pesto.

'Persian Anise'

Color: purple

Height: 30"

Anise flavored leaves are lance-shaped and have purplish tint.

As a dried herb for cooking.

'Purple Ruffles'

Color: purple

Height: 24"

1987 AAS winner has large, shiny purple-black leaves that are heavily fringed and crinkled.

Tomato dishes, sauces, pasta, soup, garnish, or as an ornamental.

'Queenette Thai'

Color: purple

Height: 24"

Strongest scent and flavor of all the Thai basil. Small, green/purple leaves have an anise flavor.

Vietnamese and Thai cooking, curries and spicy dishes.

'Red Osmin'

Color: purple

Height: 24"

Deep burgundy red medium sized leaves. One of the darkest of the purples. Beautiful pink flowers.

Vinegar, tomato dishes, sauces, vegetables, soups.

'Red Rubin'

Color: purple

Height: 18"

1992 AAS winner. Most consistent of the purple basil with a minimum of green leaves. Great traditional flavor.

Stronger flavor than Sweet Basil. Salads, garnish, or ornamental.

'Sacred (Holy)'

Color: green

Height: 22"

Ocimum sanctum. Branched, softly haired, shrubby plant. Ovate 1" leaves are crisp and have a pungent clove aroma.

Sacred to Hindus. Enhances flavor in foods, also important in Ayurvedic medicine. Add to salad or steep for tea.

'Siam Queen'

Color: green

Height: 24"

1997 AAS winner, tender and intensely flavored. Strong licorice aroma. Late flowering.

Thai and Italian recipes.

'Sicilian di Sorenti'

Color: green

Height: 24"

Genovese type from Sicily. Extra large 4" blistered leaves are very pungent with a sweet flavor.

Tomato dishes, pesto, Italian dishes.

'Spicy Globe Bush'

Color: green

Height: 16"

Sturdy uniform plant forms a dense globe-like bush. 1/2" long leaves.

Use in cooking like Sweet Basil.

'Summerlong'

Color: green

Height: 10"

Vigorous dwarf plant produces flavorful medium-sized leaves nonstop all summer. Late bloomer.

Use fresh or dried.

'Sweet Basil'

Color: green

Height: 18"

Long time favorite. Large bright green 2" leaves on prolific plants.

Tomato dishes, vegetables, pesto, and meat dishes.

'Sweet Dani'

Color: green

Height: 30"

1998 AAS winner has 75% more essential oil than other lemon basil.

Vinegars, fish dishes, salads, teas.

'Violetta'

Color: purple

Height: 24"

Italian violet basil is red with glossy ruffled purple leaves.

Intensely sweet scent and flavor.

Pesto, Italian dishes, tomato dishes.