**23 Common Varieties of Basil to Grow In Your Garden Space**

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There are more than a thousand species of plants on our planet but how many do you know? If you know most of them, how much do you know about them? Have you heard of Basil? If yes what do you know about [Basil](https://growherbsgarden.com/category/growing-hebrs/basil/)? I am here to keep you informed about Basil, its varieties, usefulness, potential benefits it offers, and other helpful information that can boost your knowledge about plants. Read on!

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**What Is Basil?**



Basil applauds itself as a leafy [herb](https://growherbsgarden.com/category/growing-hebrs/) with therapeutic (healthy) effect when taken into the body system. This herbal plant belongs to the family of mints and it is also known as **Saint John’s Worth**. It has a scientific name known as [Oscimum basilicum](https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Horticulture/Ocimum_basilicum" \t "_blank)*.* The plant comes in many varieties often differing in characteristics such as taste, smell, and savor. These differing characteristics occur as a result of the essential oils present in them. Their scent can either be sweet or pungent.

Basil supplies nutrients in the form of vitamin A, vitamin D, vitamin K, Calcium, Iron and manganese. With these nutrients, you can add basil as a sauce to your meal. Sometimes the ample quantity added to a meal is only enough to provide Vitamin K as the only vitamin.  A touch of basil as a homemade recipe is indeed a secret to good meals.

**History of Basil – the Notable Moments**



The history of basil spans in different countries with different sub-cultural beliefs. According to the Greeks, the methodology of basil’s scientific name (*Oscimum basilicum*) was said to be associated with a great man called Ocimus who was killed by a gladiator during the war. It was added that the moment he died was when basil appeared. Also, the second name (species) is said to symbolize king in old Latin. This makes the basil a resemblance of the mourning during that time. It was believed that at the time 807A.D the Egyptians used the basil as a natural preservative for embalming their dead as a symbol of love.

Many archaeologists confirmed this to be true as most Egyptians gravestones dated to that time was found to contain an essence of basil around the dead bodies. There were also some negativities revolving around basil.  For example, the Romans believe basil represents poverty, hate and misfortune all propagated from the belief that this plant thrives where abuse is inevitable. It was so much dreaded by ancient Greece that there will be much cursing and squalling whenever the plant was seen cultivated.

Meanwhile, if you seem bored with the ancient notion, then stick to the fact that basil originated from the Indians and was grown and cultivated for 5000 years. Its importance in culinary activities made it diversify to other Asian countries like China, Singapore, Thailand and it is still in use till date. Britain and Americans never got to know about Basil until the advent of the 16th century.

However, it is impertinent to note that despite its specific application to food flavoring today. The Historical basil plant was used in the area of Embalming, preservatives, expression of love, decoration/ornamentals, perfumery and medicinal remedies (because it possesses essential oil with potent anti-oxidative and antimicrobial effect).

**The Various Favourable and Beautiful Basil Varieties Available**

**1. Sweet Basil**



This variety of basil features large leaves with a medium green color and an aromatic scent. The plant itself has a size 24 to 30 inches tall, 18 inches wide. Sweet basil is one of the prominent forms of basil you can ever find in a basil garden. For whatever pestos, salads, and marinades you buy there is a chance it contains sweet basil. They are known to be irritating to some types of insects like mosquitoes.

**2. Purple Basil**



This variety of basil strikes has ornamental basil with a plant size 12 – 18 inches tall. It has leaves with glossy purplish color and is highly aromatic. It has a slight licorice taste which is not as sweet as other varieties known. It is best used as a decorative for most Italian dishes.

**3. Lemon Basil**



One notable characteristic of the lemon basil is that it has green leaves with a narrow and elongated oval shape. These leaves also have a pleasant Lemon-like aroma. The basil plant grows at size 12 – 18 inches tall. It is highly nutritional has it comes with a high level of vitamin C, vitamin K and with nutrients like manganese, copper. It has anti-microbial and anti-oxidative characteristics which make it useful as a sauce and preservative for fish or poultry marinades.

**4. Lime Basil**



The lime Basil has a plant size of 16-24 inches tall and is a rare variety sometimes confused with lemon basil. It possesses leaves which are bright green with a narrow shape and also has a citrus aroma. It is usually added with lemon for use in sauces and tea to bring out a tantalizing combination.

**5. Holy Basil**



The Holy Basil (originating from India) is has a high medicinal value due to its analgesic properties. This strongly scented herb is used to reduce stress or relieve headaches and help maintain a healthy blood sugar level. It is recommended in most culinary books to be added to spicy soups majorly due to its peppery taste.

**6. Cinnamon Basil**



This variety of Basil is also known as the *Mexican basil* with dark shiny leaves as a unique feature. The cinnamon basil is well known to be aromatic because of the presence of a chemical known as *methyl cinnamate*. Best blended with rice pudding to give a tasty and delicious meal.

**7. Ararat**



This variety is best described as a plant with dark purple stems and has a plant size up to 18 inches tall. The purple like color is primarily due to the presence of anthocyanin. This variety also features tear-drop like leaves with an anise aroma. Depending on its growing conditions it has color foliage ranging from bright to deep purple also laced with a green accent. It is a herbal basil best used as a remedy against coughs and cold due. It has the nutritional value of vitamin K, iron, calcium, manganese, magnesium and potassium. It can be used as either a flavor or garnish in salads and pasta.

**8. Green Ruffles**



One of the best varieties of Basil to plant in your garden is the Green Ruffles. It has leaves which are distinctly ruffled and curly in appearance. It also comes with a mild and delicate flavor. It is quite larger than sweet basil and applied as an ornamental plant. It is flavorsome and reputed to be like sweet basil which makes it perfect for pasta dishes.

**9. Cardinal Basil**



This plant is particularly tall with plant size that reaches 24-30 inches tall. It comes with leaves that bright green in color with a thick, oval shape. The leaves are slightly spicier with a licorice taste. It is used majorly because of its essential oils which are beneficial in lowering blood pressure and treats indigestion.

**10. Spicy Bush Basil**



The Spicy Bush Basil is quite an aromatic plant with plant size 8-12 inches tall. It is one of the decorative basil plants laced with small shiny green leaves on highly branched stems. This form of basil is used as a carminative. It is said to treat stomach problems and inhibit gastric acid secretion.

**11. Greek Basil**



The Greek basil is a plant native to India. It features small- sized but elongated leaves with a green color and a sweet scent. It is best used for a culinary purpose to add flavor to foods and dishes.

**12. Summerlong**



The summerlong basil is a very compact variety of French basil with tight bushes. It has a little appearance and is quite slow to germinate or bolt. It features densely covered, shiny and bright green leaves. Its decorative feature makes it great for pots and decorative edging in vegetable beds.

**13. Spicy Globe Basil**



This variety has smaller has smaller leaves than any other common type of Basil. It is basil plant shaped like a spherical bush. It has fragrant oval green leaves which has an aromatic scent. It is said to have a plant size about 12 inches tall and widely spread about 12- inches. This variety of basil finds its applications in culinary and ornamentals.

**14. African Blue Basil**



The African Blue Basil was said to find its first origin in Kenya. It features leaves which are purple under maturity but changes dark green with purple flecks and marron veins making them ornamental. It is quite high in its camphor and camphene concentration making it suitable for medicinal purpose. It includes essential oils like eugenol, citronellol and so on which are anti-inflammatory.

**15. Lettuce Basil**



The Lettuce Basil is a variety of Italian basil with a mild flavor. It comes with plant sizes between 6- 10 inches tall and 4 inches wide. It comes with large distinctive leaves with a wrinkled patch. This leafy property makes them useful as lettuce wraps wherein you can pack some other fruit salads. This variety of basil is probably the most productive of all.

**16. Thai Sweet Basil**



The Thai Sweet Basil is spectacular basil often used in Asian dishes. It features small and dark-pointed leaves with a spicy, Licorice flavor. One amazing quality that makes it matchless to other forms of basil is that it can retain all it flavor no matter the temperature applied

**17. Genovese Basil**



The Genovese Basil is classic Italian basil with large dark leaves which are tender, has an intense flavor and aromatic. This variety of basil is best planted in containers packed with loamy soil. It has a plant size 16-18 inches tall and 12-16 inches wide. It is widely applied in Italian and Asian dishes where it is a constituent of various pasta and salads.

**18. Licorice Basil**



The Licorice Basil comes as a lanky plant with a breed from western Thai basil. The Licorice Basil is also known as **Anise Basil.** It features leaves which are green-like and also pointed. It comes along with burgundy like flowers which are quite edible too. When crushed the leaves generate a fragrant and spicy taste making it a good use as a condiment for multiple culinary purposes.

**19. Dwarf Greek Basil**



The Dwarf Greek Basil is highly priced culinary basil with its savory flavor. It has plant sizes 10-14 inches tall. It features tiny, bright green leaves form a spherically shaped plant. The leaves bring out the fragrant smell when crushed. It also features either white or fake pink flowers. It has broad applications in gardening, culinary and medical applications.

**20. Christmas Basil**



The Christmas Basil is one of a special basil gotten as a  crossbreed of Thai and Genovese species. The basil Christmas plant is 12-inches tall and spreads 12-inches wide. Leaves from this basil variety have a glossy green color. It also features profusely stunning purple flowers making them useful as an ornamental flower. It has a unique fruity aroma representing Christmas time.

**21. Purple Ruffles Basil**



The purple Ruffel basil is yet another variety of basil to add to your collection of gardening. It quite similar with the dark Opal Basil in that it comes with a purplish leaf with shades of green. It is used as a decorative plant.

**22. Dark Opal Basil**



This basil variety is indeed quite decorative. It has uniquely beautified dark purplish coloring. This variety is a great one to use to add color to your garden and attract agents of pollination

**23. Italian Large Leaf Basil**



In search of a basil variety that tastes like a little sweeter. Then the Italian Large basil is your best option. It features distinctively large green ruffled leaves with pointed ends. It is best added to many an Italian dish by simply tearing into tearing them in.

**What Are The Benefits Of Basil?**

In a healthy term, basils are known to comprise of beneficial nutrients to the human body. It is also quite light in its caloric contents at 22 caloric content per 100 grams. This quality makes basil life-sustaining for good bodily developments. Usage of this daily will propel a healthy lifestyle within you and around your environment. Basil contains a wide variety of essential oils that help promote your body health. Basil should be an extra supplement to cure whatever health problems you have. ***They function in the area of:***

**Cancer prevention**

Having a tumor growth on any parts of the body proves to be deadly. It is estimated that 80% of all likely tumors generate into cancer later on if proper care isn’t taken. A category of basil known as the holy basil helps to deal with the effect of any tumor growth on your body. Research findings stated this to be true due to the composition of phytochemicals (flavonoids) such as Apigenin, Luteolin, Carnosic acid, rosmaric acid and myretenal. These phytochemicals function by increasing antioxidant activity by chelating with cells which goes a long way to trigger a change in gene expression and kill off tumors. Also, the presence of vitamin D help carry out the function of fighting off some basic type of cancer such as breast cancer.

**Preventing Aging**



Our body may contain some molecules known radicals. Because they are unstable, they accumulate over time and causes oxidative stress. These radicals are the one that results in aging as that tend to destroy some cells in the body system. To curb this effect, you will need some essential radical scavengers. The basil can be used as a radical scavenger because it can kill off these harmful molecules and prevent any free radical damage in the heart, brain, and liver. It does this with the aid of two water-soluble antioxidants which are; Orientin and viceninare. Using the basil will keep your youthful appearance at bay and brings freshness to your body and skin.

**Reducing Inflammations and Swellings (Arthritis)**

Basil is primarily known as an anti-inflammatory agent. It is being applied aesthetically to ease body pains. Whenever one has an inflammation especially at the body joints, there is the need to treat that inflammation carefully has it can easily spread and cause further damages to the body system. A recent study suggests that a particular di terpenoid beta-caryophyllene present in basil is responsible for easing body inflammation by reducing the pain and providing a healing effect.

**Anti-bacterial properties**

Sustaining a healthy body system implies that the body’s immune system must function effectively. According to a sturdy, washing your vegetables with basil oil derivatives will inhibit the growth of bacteria in your body system. That is primarily due to the presence of volatile oils like estragole, Linalool, cineole, sabinene, and limonene. This means preparing your food with basil will not only add flavor but reduces harmful bacteria. This will make your immune system function effectively and won’t have to ward off as much bacterial as it would.

**Fighting Depression**



Taking a dosage of a basil oil derivative may help fight depression, keeps you active and relieves you of anxiety also. Basil acts like a drug once taken into the body system by stimulating neurons moving to your body’s central Nervous system. The CNS will then transmit signals transmits to special hormones designated to induce happiness and boost energy.

**Repels insects such as Mosquitoes**

All around your garden, you get to see insects such mosquitoes flaunting around, but it can be painstaking to spray insecticides has it can harm your food crops and beneficial insects important for pollination. On a quest to finding a natural insect controller that would not cause much harm to your garden, you can use basil leaves. Basil leaves have an anti-mosquito property. By burning basil leaves in your garden, you get to kill or keep at bay unwanted insects and plant-destroying pest. An application of basil to your skin also helps to protect you from mosquito bites.

**Important for Body Detoxification**



Your natural body organ Liver helps remove toxic wastes and performs body metabolism. Basil provides your body with an alternative way of eliminating toxins from your body. As your liver is a delicate organ, the use of basil will help prevent fat build-up and keep liver healthy

**Regulates Your Blood Sugar**

There is an ultimate need to control your blood sugar level. Thanks to a hormone in the body called insulin which is available to carry out this function. However, your blood sugar can reach a peak where a body hormone (insulin) fails resulting to type 2 diabetes. By meaning you have to watch your diet intake and take special care to minimize an extreme amount of sugar. This is where basil comes in, by consuming basil along with your food there will be a slow release of sugar in your blood. Basil can achieve this with essential oil that helps break down triglyceride and cholesterol levels. This will go a long way to reduce a high diabetic risk factor.

**Types of Basil for Easy Grow**



Here are the various varieties of basil suited for cooking. The basil plants are meant to either decorate your food or add flavor and scent. In this section, a list of such basil is given along with short tips for growing them. In general, basil plants nourish in a well- damped soil with enough nutrients. Care must be taken to ensure that any basil plant receives enough light from the sun.

**1. Sweet Basil**

Sweet basil steals the top spot as the most used basil plant for culinary activities due to their sweet savor. You don’t need a high level of gardening experience to grow your sweet basil all you need is an environment with full sun and a well-drained but fertile soil.

***To grow sweet basil from seed ([Turkmaria](https://growherbsgarden.com/turkmaria/" \t "_blank)) level:***

* Begin planting at least 4-6 weeks before frost time.
* Plant indoors in seedling trays.
* Place plant in a direction facing sunlight.
* After it has grown, then transplant outside permanently.

**2. Lemon Basil**

To grow lemon basil, ensure you water it daily, but not directly to the leaves. Lemon Basil requires phosphate nutrients to grow well, therefore, ensure you use fertilizer rich in phosphate content. Continuous pruning of this herb ensures an effective air-circulation which allows for productive growth and development of the plant.

**3. Lime Basil**

To grow the lime Basil one need a moderately drained soil, well-nourished with nutrients. Growing of Lime basil requires you to fertilize once in a month. Wetting of plant is a process done once every week during the warm weather. A method is known as pinching (removing growing tips of blossoms) should be done when the plant is 6-inches tall. Pinching of the plant promotes its healthy growth. Harvesting of the basil leaves should be done monthly, as harvesting also promote the growth of basil plant.

**4. Green Ruffles**

During the growing stage, ensure your plant gets adequate water supply by keeping the soil moist. For growing the plant doesn’t require much sunlight since it can tolerate a bit shady spot. Ensure you plant at locations with a temperature between 65-70oF and avoid icy regions.

**5. Cinnamon Basil**

The Cinnamon Basil requires spacing between 6- 12 inches apart for growing. Ensure the plant gets enough sunlight. Adequate water supply is needed to keep your soil moist and grow well.

**6. Genovese Basil**

An Optimum soil pH is required for growing this culinary variety of basil plant. Since this basil needs at least 6 -8hours of direct sunlight ensure you place at a location as to get ample supply of direct sun. You can grow the Genovese basil with other companion plants like Tomatoes.

**7. Lettuce Basil**

Growing the Lettuce basil requires you be wary of frost when you plant outdoors. To grow you plant 0.25 inches deep and space them 10- 12inches apart. Ensure the soil is well drain and fertilize regularly.

**8. Spicy Bush Basil**

Growing the spicy Bush Basil requires you planting on a good quality potting soil. For a good and effective growth the Spicy Bush basil enough sunlight to ensure proper photosynthesis. A process known as pruning is required when growing to help it flourish.

**9. Spicy Globe Basil**

Planting the Spicy Globe Basil requires that you grow 3-4 weeks before the next frost. It requires that you plant the seeds 0.25 inches deep and 15- 18 inches apart. Also, prune the plant so it can grow healthy. Remember that most Basil plants thrive in soil that drains well and this variety is no exception. Ensure you irrigate often. If the weather drops below 50 degrees ensure you provide protection hence it dies.

**Tips For Uses Of Basil**

**• Cooking**



The basil is well known in many Italian culinary dishes. It uses in Kitchen is based on the fact that it can add scent and savor to whatever food you prepare. It adds some depth of flavor that can’t be rivaled with any other herbal spice. To maximize this flavor, you don’t need to crush it, tear and add to whatever food you’re making.

**• Used As A Tonic For Stomach Aches**



Due to basil medicinal benefits, its use is essential to solving some of the mysterious stomach upsets and headache. A simple addition will help calm your stomach and help alleviate indigestion.

**• As Analgesic for Headaches**

The analgesic properties found in basil can be used to relax the muscles and cure migraine. The most preferred form of basil for this use is ‘Holy Basil.’ By merely boiling water with the addition of Basil you get to relieve yourself of headache or migraine. All you need do is cover your head over a pot of steamed basil leaves and inhale the steam. Also, basil oil made from this process can be added to other home remedial oils, which can be applied to face to ease muscle tension.

**• Curing Skin diseases**



Basil comes with Essential oils that are indeed beneficial to the skin and helps deal with skin diseases like Acne. Acne is a long term skin disease; a condition that often results in symptoms of blackened spots on the face and parts of the skin. It is thought that oil prepared from basil leaves (which are anti-inflammatory, anti-oxidative) can help cure acne condition. A simple addition of 6-10 leaves of basil in a cup of water will produce the basil oil which can be applied daily on the acne spots.

**• Used for Reducing Blood sugar level**

Consumption of basil with your regular diet will ensure a regulated flow of sugar into your bloodstream. Its ability to reduce blood sugar flows from the fact that basil can inhibit the release of sugar into the bloodstream when consumed along with food. It also functions to aid a special hormone in the body known as insulin (a hormone responsible for the regulation of blood sugar levels). Its ability to perform this vital function is indeed beneficial to a diabetic patient on a restricted diet.

**• For preservation**

Nothing matches the ability of basil to provide a surface for the preservation of food qualities. Basil can preserve food materials as a result of its anti-oxidative property. Basil’s anti-bacterial, anti-fungal effect help prevent any food decay or contamination. Its addition goes a long way to prevent food rancidity and keep the quality in check. Studies carried out by food technologists shows the ability of basil oil to preserve fish when poured over it. This is majorly due to the presence of some major essential oils in basil. To preserve your food all you need do is apply your basil solution over the food you want to preserve.

**• Used as a relief from stings/bites**

Anyone who needs a pain relief substance for bites and stings can make use of essential oils. Some of these essential oils can be found in basil leaves. Basil has the ultimate advantage of standing against skin irritation from bites due to the presence of thymol and camphor.  Thymol and camphor have anti-inflammatory properties. To use basil, all you need is crush the basil leaves rub directly on the affected part of the skin.

**Conclusion**

It is understood that basil is a member of the mint family with various applications both for culinary, medicine and ornamentals. Some of these basil varieties have varying properties ranging from small leaf size to large one. Also, there are others with a sweet savor while others have licorice or pungent smell. One fact about basil is that it can grow and adapt in a well-moistened soil environment. Also, the part of the plant harvested depends on the purpose for which it is needed.

The types of basil such as Sweet Basil, cinnamon basil, lemon basil, Spicy Globe bushes are important for their culinary purpose. Some other types such as the Holy Basil are well reserved for their medicinal purposes and many others for ornamentals.



***Source:***

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