

## Description

**Basil Dark Opal**  
**Ocimum Basilicum Purpurascens**  
**Family: Lamiaceae**

Basil Dark Opal is of the same variety as the Sweet Basil and equal in fragrance and taste but with a dark purple leaf and bright pink flower.

## Growing Tips

It is an annual plant best grown in rich, well drained soil in a sunny spot, sheltered from wind, between October and March. It can grow up to 60cm high and 30cm in diameter and the leaves grow up to 5cm long and 2.5cm wide.

## Parts Used

Leaves and flowers

## Uses

The fresh leaves are used in salads, sandwiches and pesto, and for infusing oils and vinegars. It renders vinegars purple in colour. The taste is more spicy and less bitter. The purple colour indicates a high concentration of anthocyanins, a powerful antioxidant, and can be potentially used as a natural colouring. The flowers and the foliage are used for contrast in flower beds and the flowers for fragrance in floral arrangements.

## Origin & History

The Dark Opal variety was created in 1950 at the University of Connecticut and is also known as Red Rubin.

Basil is considered a sacred herb in India and was brought to Europe through the Middle East. A Belgian tale told if you ground it between two rocks, a scorpion would grow from its remains.

