

Chervil Anthriscus Cerefolium Family: Apiaceae

Description

Chervil is similar to Parsley although its branched, grooved stems and tripinnate, dainty leaves are softer in colour and texture than Parsley. Its flavour is less pungent and sweeter with a hint of licorice or aniseed.

All leaves are centred around a white taproot and the flower stem reaches up to 40-70 cm high and forms small white flowers on a series of umbels.

Growing Tips

This annual herb prefers a cool, shaded place with damp soil. Take care when transplanting this plant not to damage the taproot. In hot weather it will go to seed quickly and for best results trim the leaves frequently and plant 30cm apart.

Parts Used

Leaves

Uses

Chervil is sometimes called the 'gourmet's Parsley' due to its delicate flavour. Together with Tarragon, Chives and Parsley, Chervil is part of the 'fines herbes' combination often used in French recipes.

It enhances the flavour of spring food such as salmon, trout, chicken, new potatoes, spring salads, asparagus, soups and omelettes. Infuse vinegar with the leaves for a delicious subtle flavor and it also makes a great garnish.

Skin contact with the leaf combined with sunlight may induce a rash on some people.

For medicinal use, drink it as a tea to lower blood pressure and as a soothing eye wash. Chervil is also rich source of vitamin C, iron and magnesium.

Origin & History

Chervil originates from the Caucasus in Western Russia, and was brought to Europe during the Roman occupation. Chervil was used as a digestive aid and when soaked in vinegar, taken to stop lingering hiccups and to lower blood pressure. It was also used to repel slugs.

It is said to sharpen the mind and lift the spirit and symbolizes sincerity.

In parts of Europe a Chervil soup is a traditional meal for holy Thursday before Easter, (green Thursday), as a symbol for new beginnings.

The essential oil resembles that of Myrrh and this may be the reason for its other name of Myrrhis.

