

Description

Fennel Florence, Finocchio
Foeniculum Vulgare var. dulce
Family: Apiaceae

Growing Tips

Florence Fennel grows to a height of 75-100cm, with green feathery foliage and yellow umbel flowers. This variety develops a bulbous white thickening at ground level from which each stem originates. The bulb forms an edible vegetable with an anise-like taste.

Parts Used

It grows in well-drained soil and needs full sun. Plant Florence Fennel in early summer at 20cm apart, and when the base starts to thicken, build up soil around it. Harvest when the bulb is the size of a tennis ball and do not let this go to seed as the bulbs will lose their tenderness.

Uses

Leaves and stem base, also known as 'bulbs'

Origin & History

The most frequent use of this variety is to use its bulb as a vegetable which can be steamed, boiled, braised or baked. With its sweet anise flavour it is often used in Italian cooking. The leaves can be added to salads or fish dishes. It is rich in minerals such as iron, copper, magnesium, potassium and calcium.

Fennel originates along the shores of the Mediterranean sea, and is naturalized in most parts of the world, along riverbanks and along seashores.

Roman soldiers used it to prevent diseases during battle; women used it to prevent obesity and to assist during fasting and prolonged church services, as it is appetite-suppressing.

Its antioxidant and pest-dispelling quality was also used during the Middle Ages to make old meats more palatable.

