

Hyssop *Hyssopus Officinalis* Family: Lamiaceae

Description

Hyssop is a herbaceous perennial growing up to 60cm tall with dark green oblong leaves arranged opposite at 3cm intervals along the stem. It produces small, blue lipped flowers arranged in whorls on one side of the stem in summer that are very attractive to butterflies.

Growing Tips

Grow Hyssop 30cm apart in well-drained soil with plenty of sun. Prune back after flowering and again in spring to avoid woodiness.

Parts Used

Leaves.

Uses

Hyssop's culinary uses are similar to Thyme and Sage and is best served in stews, soups, stuffing and meat dishes. Young leaves can also be added to salads. Its medicinal qualities help relieve coughs and colds and soothe the nerves in cases of anxiety or hysteria. It can be used as a tea or tincture, and its essential oils are used in perfumery and liqueurs. In the garden, Hyssop is used as a border attracting butterflies and bees, and a good companion plant to Brassicas, but not to radish.

Origin & History

There is frequent reference in the old testament to Hyssop in connection with cleansing and protecting people who have been in contact with death and illness, though the reference may be referring to Origanum which grows more profusely in that region.

The confusion may be because the name Hyssop derives from 'azob' which means simply 'holy herb'.

