

## Description

## Growing Tips

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## Origin & History

# Thyme Emerald Carpet

## Thymus Praecox ssp. Arcticus

### Family: Lamiaceae

Thyme Emerald Carpet is a small woody shrub which only grows to about 10cm tall. It has bright green leaves along thin branched twigs and in summer produces a mass of pure white flowers. It makes a nice ground cover, especially around other, taller herbs or trees such as Lemon Verbena or citrus or along paving.

This perennial prefers plenty of sun and neutral to alkaline soil with good drainage. The shrub can be kept where it is and trimmed to any desired shape.

Its small white flower attracts bees and benevolent insects. For best results plant them 20cm apart.

Leaves with stems

This Thyme is used mainly for its pure white flowers as ground cover but can also be used in cooking and is a fantastic accompaniment to meat or as a pizza topping. Its bitter quality alleviates bloating and flatulence.

When using fresh, one or more whole twigs can be placed in a casserole with the stems removed just before serving. The dried leaves can be stored for up to a year, and only about a third in quantity is needed compared to fresh leaves. Thyme also holds its flavor very well while cooking.

Thyme originates in Western Mediterranean areas and was brought to Europe by the Romans who also added it to cheeses and liquors. It now grows wild in parts of South Canterbury. The name Thyme has links to the Greek language where it meant "courage" or "to fumigate".

In ancient Egypt it was used for embalming and Roman soldiers inhaled its smoke or its steam when placed in baths to give them courage. Placed in a pillow, Thyme was said to induce sleep and ward off nightmares.

The oil was used in World War I to ease pain and as an antiseptic.

It was also believed that twigs of Thyme placed on coffins would assure safe passage into the spiritual world.

