

# Living Herbs

## Description

## Growing Tips

## Parts Used

## Uses

## Origin & History

### Peppermint *Mentha piperita* Family: Lamiaceae

It is a perennial herbaceous rhizomatous plant that has square-edged fibrous stems up to 50cm tall. It produces very fragrant, slender pointed dark green leaves with a slight sheen, reddish veins and serrated edges, 4-9cm long in a regular alternating opposite pattern. Small white to pale purple flowers form towards the tip of the stem in small spaced whorls.

It likes partial or full sun and an airy place with fertile soil that is kept moist throughout the summer but it dies down in winter. For best results plant 30cm apart and place in a pot to prevent spreading.

Leaves and flowering tops.

The medicinal use of Peppermint is due to its volatile oil menthol and derivatives, and is used for freshening flavour in toothpaste, chewing gum and hair care. As a tea it aids digestion, freshens breath and helps cope with summer heat and hot flushes due to its cooling.

New research has shown it to be effective in treating Irritable Bowel Syndrome, to protect during radiation therapy and to improve recall. For essential oil production it is used fresh, but can be dried to make tea.

Peppermint is indigenous to Europe and grows wild along waterways. It has been naturalized throughout the world with many different varieties.

In Greek mythology it was called the herb of hospitality; leaves were strewn over loam floors to dispel the earthy smell in rooms and replace it with the fresh Mint flavour.

Testimony to its medicinal qualities have been found from archaeological sites and date back ten thousand years.



# Peppermint