

# Living Herbs

## Description

**Mint Basil**  
**Mentha sp.**  
**Family: Lamiaceae**

## Growing Tips

Mint Basil is a perennial herbaceous rhizomatous plant that has square-edged fibrous stems up to 60cm tall and produces very fragrant oval dark green leaves 4-9cm long and with strong venation running lengthwise from the mid vein. This species has a tinge of chocolate in its scent. Small white to pale purple flowers form towards the tip of the stem in spaced whorls.

## Parts Used

It likes part sun or shade and somewhere airy with fertile moist soil and dies down in winter. The main way to propagate this plant is through the new shoots from the creeping rhizomes. For best results plant 30cm apart and grow in a pot to prevent spreading.

## Uses

Leaves

This mint is particularly nice to use in pesto as it combines the flavours of Mint and Basil. It's also delicious in summer salads and new potatoes.

The medicinal use of Mint is due to its volatile oil menthol and derivatives and is used for its 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 as it is cooling.

New research has shown it to be effective in treating Irritable Bowel Syndrome, to protect during radiation therapy and to improve recall. Inhalation of the essential oil has also proven to help in weight loss as it reduces the calorie intake.

## Origin & History

Mint is indigenous to Europe and has been naturalised 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.

Its medicinal qualities are recorded since prehistoric archaeological times.

Mint Basil

