

Foeniculum vulgare
Family: *Apiaceae*- carrot, parsley
Parts: seed (other parts can be used for food but only the seed is medicinal)

From the time of the Pharaohs in Egypt, fennel has been a favorite herb as a digestive aid, support, and help. It has a licorice type taste and can naturally sweeten any herbal tea. If you are not a big fan of licorice flavor, dill seed could be used with similar properties.

Properties

Antispasmodic, Anthelmintic, Antibacterial, Anti-Inflammatory, Antifungal, Carminative, Demulcent, Diuretic, Expectorant, Galactagogue, Purgative, Nervine, Tonic.

Energetics: cooling, sweet
Systems Affected: digestive, liver, kidney

Uses

- Digestive aid; upset stomach, cramping, diarrhea, constipation, expels gas, promotes bile secretion, IBS, colic, and even killing pathogenic bacteria in the gut.
- Heartburn and indigestion (chew a few seeds after each meal)
- Upset stomach due to nerves. Calms both the body and the mind.
- Nausea, belching, bloating, and heartburn.
- Women's Health; mild estrogenic effect, PMS symptom relief, help start periods if struggling with menstruation, increase milk production for nursing mamas, menopause.
- Colic in babies (mama can drink it for milk production and baby gets it through the milk)
- Improves vision and can help with eye inflammation and conjunctivitis.
- Helps break up and expel mucus from chest congestion. Use for coughs and respiratory issues.
- Breaks up stagnation anywhere in the body

Herb Preparations

- Chew the seeds (stimulates appetite before a meal, helps with digestion after)
- Tea - crush the seeds before making a tea or adding to a blend
- Tincture
- Honey, syrup
- Herbal oil

- Bath, foot soak
- Powder, capsules, sprinkle

Care/Harvesting

You can find fennel in your local nursery or plant from seed. Fennel doesn't get along well with vegetable gardens so plant in a different area. It is drought tolerant and grows in any type of soil and condition. It will continue to self-seed if some seeds are left on the plant in the fall.

- Seeds: When the seed heads turn brown with grey stripes, they are ready to harvest by snipping off the umbel and shaking or rubbing the seeds off. If they have any moisture left in them, leave out in the sun for a couple of days or dehydrate before storing.
- Leaves: Can be harvested as food anytime.
- Bulb: The bulb can be harvested as a vegetable late summer early fall. It can be chopped and added to foods or dried.

Safety

High doses of fennel can stimulate the uterus which makes it great for menstruation but not so great if pregnant.