

Ociumum – variety of species
Family: *Lamiaceae* - mint family
Parts: leaves

Basil is an aromatic garden herb that does not have to be crushed or bruised to release its oils. There are over 150 different varieties of basil, each with its own unique fragrance, look and even medicinal properties. It is fun to plant a variety throughout the garden.

Properties:

Antibacterial, anti-infectious, anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, antiseptic, antispasmodic, antiseptic, antiviral, aromatic, carminative, decongestant, diaphoretic, expectorant, febrifuge, stimulant.

Energetics: cooling
Systems Affected: digestive, nervous

Uses:

- Sinus and bronchial congestion, dissolves phlegm and mucous
- Cold and flu
- Fever
- Increase milk flow in nursing mothers
- Fatigue, clears the mind
- Depression, stress, and anxiety
- Insomnia
- Cleanses and tones the digestive system
- Upset tummy (any digestive complaint)
- Nausea, vomiting, gas, stomach cramps
- Headache
- Soothes insect bites and stings (use fresh as a poultice)
- Repels flies and insects
- Purifies the air

Herb Preparations:

- Food: pesto, use liberally in cooking dishes.
- Tea
- Tincture
- Poultice, compress

- Vinegar tincture for culinary use
- Herbal oil
- Syrup, honey
- Herbal butter or ghee
- Herbal sprinkle
- Bath and foot soak
- Herbal pillow
- Basil essential oil

Care/Harvesting:

Basil is quite easy to grow from seed or you can transplant them from a nursery. It will grow in almost any garden and there are many varieties to choose from.

- If starting from seed, start indoors 4-6 weeks before the last frost. Keep in a warm, sunny location. Basil loves it warm.
- Transplant outdoors 12" apart in full sun after the last frost. You can sow seeds directly into the garden after the last frost also, it will take 7-10 days to sprout.
- Water regularly.
- Pinch back stems regularly to keep your plant full, bushy, and producing all season. Once the plant flowers it will go to seed and be done for the season.
- Companion plant next to peppers and tomatoes.
- To harvest cut leaves off the top of the plant throughout the growing season. At the end of the season cut the entire plant down to preserve for winter use. Basil is an annual so it will have to be planted each spring.
- Dry as quickly as possible and only use the leaves that retain a healthy green color. If they turn dark or black the medicinal properties have been lost.
- There are two methods for freezing basil, first wash the leaves, dry with a towel and freeze them whole, wrapped in paper towels. You can also chop the leaves, place in an ice cube tray and pour water over the top. Freeze, then pop out the cubes and store in a freezer bag.