**Mint to Be!**

1. What is Mint?

Fresh mint is a perennial herb. It is available all year-round but it is most abundant in the warm summer months. Mint is as tasty as it is healthy. Its essential oil is widely used in manufactured products such as toothpaste, shower gel and medicines for its naturally antibacterial and cooling qualities. In cooking, mint can be incorporated into a dish to make the most of this herb’s aromatic, flavorsome and digestive abilities.

1. Mint will grow between 10 and 120 cm tall and can spread over a large area; due to their tendency to spread, some mints are considered invasive.
2. Leaf colors range from dark green to purple, blue and pale yellow.
3. The leaves are arranged in opposite pairs and with a serrated margin, and are used as the herb, which can be used fresh or dried
4. There is an unknown number of different species of mint.
5. Mint grows best near pools of water, lakes, rivers and cool moist spots in partial shade.
6. Mint grows all year round and is fast growing, extending their reach along surfaces through a network of runners.
7. To control mint, it should be planted in deep, bottomless containers sunk in the ground, or planted above ground in tubs or barrels.
8. To grow mint, it is easier to plant cuttings from the runner of healthy mints vs using seeds.
9. The most popular mints are: peppermint, native spearmint, Scotch spearmint, cornmint and apple mint. Mint leaves, without a qualifier like 'peppermint' or 'apple mint', generally refers to spearmint leaves.
10. Mint is a good companion plant – repelling pesty insects and attracting beneficial ones.
11. The mint family includes many other aromatic herbs, including most of the more common cooking herbs, such as basil, rosemary, sage, and oregano.
12. History of Mint
13. Mint is an ancient herb used for its culinary, medicinal and aromatic properties. The origins of mint are honored in a Greek myth that tells the tale that the plant was Minthe, who was transformed into a plant by Persephone, who was jealous of the affections that her husband Pluto was showing to Minthe. While Pluto could not reverse the spell that his wife cast, he did impart Minthe with a sweet smell, so when she was walked upon in the garden, her aroma would be delightful to the senses.
14. Mint's characteristic smell has made it one of the more popular perfuming herbs throughout history. Around the globe, from Europe to India to the Middle East, mint has been used to clear the air in both temples and homes. Mint has also come to symbolize hospitality in many cultures. In ancient Greece, mint leaves were rubbed on dining tables to welcome guests, while in the Middle East, the host still traditionally offers mint tea to guests upon their arrival.
15. Mint has played an important role in the American tradition. While the Native Americans were using mint even before the arrival of the European settlers, the early colonists brought this prized herb with them from the Old World since they had long honored it for its therapeutic properties, as well as for the delicious hot tea beverage made from its leaves.
16. Health Benefits of Mint

Fresh herbs are often ignored when talking about what it takes to make up a healthy diet, but herbs contain a wide variety of nutrients and offer a significant number of health benefits. Mint, the well known mouth and breath freshener that is scientifically known as “Mentha” has been used for hundreds of years for its remarkable medicinal and health properties.

1. Mint gets its tell tale enticing aroma from menthol, an essential oil present in its leaves.
2. Mint contains a number of vitamins and minerals which are vital to maintain good health. Even though mint is mostly consumed in small quantities, the vital nutrients obtained are still beneficial and shouldn’t be underestimated.
3. **Mint has one of the highest antioxidant capacities of any food.** It contains an antioxidant and anti-inflammatory agent called rosmarinic acid which has been studied for its effectiveness in relieving seasonal allergy symptoms.
4. Adding mint to your dishes is a great way to add flavor to a dish or beverage without adding excessive calories, sugar or sodium.
5. Two tablespoons of fresh mint provides 2 calories! Virtually no calories, fat or sodium.
6. Mint contains small amounts of potassium, magnesium, calcium, phosphorus, vitamin C, iron and vitamin A.
7. **Digestion:** Randomized controlled trials have repeatedly shown the ability of peppermint oil to relieve symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome, including indigestion, dyspepsia, and colonic muscle spasms. These healing properties of peppermint are apparently related to its smooth muscle relaxing ability. The menthol contained in peppermint may be a key reason for this bowel-comforting effect. The aroma of mint activates the [salivary glands](http://journals.lww.com/jcge/Abstract/1988/10000/Saliva__Its_Role_in_Health_and_Disease.19.aspx) in our mouth as well as glands which secrete digestive enzymes, thereby facilitating digestion. These attributes are why mint is extensively used in the culinary arts. Much of the western world includes mint as a part of appetizers or as an element of palate cleansers, to be eaten before the main course so the [food](https://www.organicfacts.net/organic-products/organic-food/health-benefits-of-food.html?utm_source=internal&utm_medium=link&utm_campaign=smartlinks) will digest comfortably.
8. Mint is a [natural stimulant](http://www.banglajol.info/index.php/JPharma/article/viewArticle/220), and the smell alone can be enough to charge your batteries and get your brain functioning on a high level again. If you are feeling sluggish, anxious, depressed, or simply exhausted, mint and its derivative [essential oils](https://www.organicfacts.net/health-benefits/essential-oils/list-of-essential-oils.html?utm_source=internal&utm_medium=link&utm_campaign=smartlinks) can help. It can be ingested, applied topically in a salve form, or inhaled as a vapor, and all of those techniques can give you a much-needed boost! A popular way to get good results in an easy manner is to put a few drops of mint essential oil or menthol oil on your pillow at night and let it work on your body and mind while you [sleep](https://www.organicfacts.net/home-remedies/top-10-tips-for-good-sleep.html?utm_source=internal&utm_medium=link&utm_campaign=smartlinks).
9. While mint oil is a good antiseptic and anti-pruritic material, mint juice is an excellent skin cleanser. It soothes skin, and helps to cure infections and itchiness, as well as being a good way to reduce pimples, and it can even relieve some of the symptoms of [acne](https://www.organicfacts.net/home-remedies/home-remedies-for-acne.html?utm_source=internal&utm_medium=link&utm_campaign=smartlinks). Its anti-pruritic properties can be used for treating insect bites like those of mosquitoes, honeybees, hornets, wasps, and gnats. The cooling sensation will relieve you of the irritating sensation to scratch, and the anti-inflammatory nature of mint will bring down swelling! Mint oil is often a basic component of [bug repellent](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1572557X06030029) products like citronella candles, because the strong aroma is unappealing to most insects.
10. A few tips and how to grow and use mint
11. Harvesting of mint leaves can be done at any time. Fresh leaves should be used immediately or stored up to a few days in plastic bags in a refrigerator. Optionally, leaves can be frozen in ice cube trays. Dried mint leaves should be stored in an airtight container placed in a cool, dark, dry area.
12. Mint is relatively easy to grow and can even be grown in small pots on a sunny windowsill. Growing mint in your garden can help ward off ants and flies.
13. When preparing mint, use a sharp knife and cut gently. Using a dull knife or over-chopping will bruise the herb and much of the flavor will be lost on the cutting board surface.
14. Whenever possible, choose fresh mint over the dried form of the herb since it is superior in flavor. The leaves of fresh mint should look vibrant and be a rich green color. They should be free from dark spots or yellowing.
15. To store fresh mint leaves, carefully wrap them in a damp paper towel and place inside of a loosely closed plastic bag. Store in the refrigerator, where it should keep fresh for several days. Dried mint should be kept in a tightly sealed glass container in a cool, dark and dry place, where it will keep fresh for about nine to twelve months.
16. Ideas for using Mint!
    1. The leaves have a warm, fresh, aromatic, sweet flavor with a cool aftertaste, and are used in teas, beverages, jellies, syrups, candies, and ice creams.
    2. Incorporate mint into a fresh fruit salsa or on top of baked chicken.
    3. Jazz up your water by adding mint leaves and cucumber for a refreshing treat.
    4. Add a few chopped mint leaves to your next chocolate chip cookie dough.
    5. Pour hot water over mint leaves and steep for 5-6 minutes for homemade mint tea. Try using chocolate mint leaves for a twist.
    6. Chop mint and toss with fresh pineapple for a quick snack.
17. Fun Facts on Mint
18. Alcoholic drinks sometimes feature mint for flavor or garnish, such as the mint julep, mojito or grasshopper.
19. Known in Greek mythology as the herb of hospitality, one of mint's first known uses in Europe was as a room deodorizer. The herb was strewn across floors to cover the smell of the hard-packed soil. Stepping on the mint helped to spread its scent through the room. Today, it is more commonly used for aromatherapy through the use of essential oils.
20. Mint gets its name from Menthe, a Greek mythical character
21. Mint comes in over 30 varieties
22. Ancient Romans and Greeks used mint to flavor cordials and fruit compotes also for baths and perfumes
23. Ancient Hebrews used to scatter mint over the synagogue floor for its scent
24. The common garden mint is spearmint
25. Mexicans call mint Yerba Bueno or “good herb”
26. Mint Plants originated in the Mediterranean region
27. Mint has been found in Egyptian tombs from as far back as 1000 BC!
28. The US produces 70% of the Worlds peppermint and spearmint