Longfellow's Greenhouses

Sweet Italian Basil

Ocimum basilicum 'Sweet Italian'



Sweet Italian Basil flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 24 inches

Spread: 16 inches

Spacing: 12 inches

Sunlight: ○

Hardiness Zone: (annual)

Other Names: Italian Large Leaf Basil, Lemon Basil

Description:

An ornamental herb producing flower spikes adorned with white flower spikes in mid summer; flavorful light green leaves; great for mixed containers, herb gardens, and annual beds

Edible Qualities

Sweet Italian Basil is an annual herb that is commonly grown for its edible qualities, although it does have ornamental merits as well. The large fragrant pointy light green leaves are usually harvested from early summer to early fall. The leaves have a delicious taste and a pleasant fragrance.

The leaves are most often used in the following ways:

- Fresh Eating
- Cooking
- Seasoning

Planting & Growing

Sweet Italian Basil will grow to be about 20 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 16 inches. When grown in masses or used as a bedding plant, individual plants should be spaced approximately 12 inches apart. This fast-growing annual will normally live for one full growing season, needing replacement the following year.

This plant is quite ornamental as well as edible, and is as much at home in a landscape or flower garden as it is in a designated herb garden. It should only be grown in full sunlight. It prefers to grow in average to moist conditions, and shouldn't be allowed to dry out. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This is a selected variety of a species not originally from North America. It can be propagated by cuttings; however, as a cultivated variety, be aware that it may be subject to certain restrictions or prohibitions on propagation.

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Sweet Italian Basil is a good choice for the edible garden, but it is also well-suited for use in outdoor pots and containers. With its upright habit of growth, it is best suited for use as a 'thriller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination; plant it near the center of the pot, surrounded by smaller plants and those that spill over the edges. Note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.

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