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Thursday, May 1, 2025



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How to Grow Mint Plants: The Complete Guide



Mint is an easy herb to grow in your garden and can add flavor to every meal.

Botanical Name:	Mentha
Plant Type:	Herb
Sun Exposure:	Full Sun

Planting, Growing, and Harvesting Mint

FREE GUIDE!



Last Updated: April 24, 2025



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Mint practically grows itself! This herb adds flavor to foods and tea and is also useful for aiding digestion. All you need to do is confine mint to keep it from spreading. See tips on planting, growing, controlling, and harvesting mint.

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About Mint

Mint is a perennial herb with very fragrant, toothed leaves and tiny purple, pink, or white flowers. There are many varieties of mint—all fragrant, whether shiny or fuzzy, smooth or crinkled, bright green or variegated. However, you can always tell a member of the mint family by its square stem. Rolling it between your fingers, you'll notice an aromatic scent and think of candy, sweet teas, or even mint juleps.

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As well as kitchen companions, mints are used as garden accents, ground covers, air fresheners, and herbal medicines. These are beautiful

thriving in sun and shade all over North America. Since mint can be a vigorous spreader, you must be careful where you plant it.

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- [12 Uses for Mint Leaves, for Health and Home](#)

PLANTING

- Mints are vigorous perennials that thrive in light soil with good drainage.
- Ideally, they prefer a moist but well-drained site, something like their native habitat along stream banks.
- Most will grow in sun or partial shade; the variegated types may require some protec-

- For outdoor growing, plant one or two purchased plants (or one or two cuttings from a friend) about two feet apart in moist soil. One or two plants will easily cover the ground. Mint should grow to be one or two feet tall.
- Mint is a vigorous grower that needs to be contained, or it will send out its runners and spread all over your garden. The key is to contain the plant's roots. Whether in the ground or above ground, plant mint in a pot. We suggest planting each mint in a 10-inch pot with drainage holes. You can then sink this pot into the ground or another larger container of soil.
- If you are fine with mint becoming a ground cover and understand that it may become invasive, plant in its own raised bed or separate area.
- In the garden, plant mint near cabbage and tomatoes—in pots, again, in order to prevent it from spreading and stealing nutrients from your crops!

Check out this video to learn more about how to grow mint.

...Many Benefits of Mint & How to Grow it



GROWING

- Minimal care is needed for mint. For outdoor plants, use a light mulch. This will help keep the soil moist and keep the leaves clean.
- Indoor plants should be watered regularly to keep the soil evenly moist.
- At first, mints develop into well-behaved-looking, bushy, upright clumps, but they soon set out to conquer new territory with horizontal runners and underground rhizomes. Unless you block the advance, a peppermint plant can become a sprawling 4-foot giant in just 1 year. It's not the stuff of horror movies, however. Mints benefit from picking and pruning. They are shallow-rooted and easy to pull out, so there's no reason to worry as long as you provide physical barriers such as walls, walkways, or containers.



Photo Credit: Juta/Shutterstock

- Apple/Pineapple Mint: *Mentha suaveolens*
- Corsican Mint: *Mentha requienii*
- Pennyroyal: *Mentha pulegium*
- Peppermint: *Mentha x piperita*
- Citrus Mint: *Mentha x piperita* var. *citrata*
- Spearmint: *Mentha spicata*

HARVESTING

- Frequent harvesting is the key to keeping mint plants at their best. Young leaves have more flavor than old ones, and mint can be harvested as soon as it comes up in spring. Although fresh is best, and sprigs should be kept in water for a few days, mint leaves can be frozen or air-dried in bunches.
- Right before flowering, cut the stems 1 inch from the ground. You can harvest one mint plant two or three times in one growing season.
- You can also pick the leaves as you need them.
- You can grow the plants indoors for fresh leaves throughout the winter. If you want to dry them, it's best to cut the leaves right before flowering. Store the dried leaves in an airtight container.

Propagating Mint

The best way to propagate mints is by taking

them horizontally in the soil. Mint stems will also root in a glass of water. Start with a small cutting from an established plant. Any gardening friend will give you a cutting of a favorite mint.



Photo Credit: Joannawnuk/Shutterstock

GARDENING PRODUCTS



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PESTS/DISEASES

- [Powdery mildew](#)
 - [Rust](#)
 - Leaf spot
 - [Anthracnose](#)
 - Stem canker
 - Mice dislike the smell of peppermint. Spread it liberally where you suspect the critters.
- Mint is also considered a [deer-resistant plant](#).

Make the Most of Your Available Space

See how many plants will fit and which crops can occupy the same space in your garden at different times of the year.



Mint (12 plants) ~ row length: 14' 9"

Try the Almanac Garden Planner Here for Free >>

WIT AND WISDOM

- To relieve a tension headache, apply a compress of mint leaves to your forehead. Rubbing the oil on your temples will relieve your headache. Learn more about the [medicinal benefits and many uses of mint](#).
- Mint is a symbol of virtue. Find out more [plant meanings here](#).
- Mint can also help to relieve stress and anxiety. Find out how to [use your fresh mint as a calming herb here](#).

“If any man can name ... all the varieties of mint, he must know how many fish swim in the Indian Ocean.” –Walafrid Strabo (c. 808–849)

RECIPES

MINTED FRUIT MOLD

MINT LEMONADE

CILANTRO AND MINT SAUCE

COOKING NOTES

Serious cooks generally prefer **spearmint** for

apple or orange mint for a delicate mint taste in fruit salads, yogurt, or tea. Mint lurks in the background in Middle Eastern salads, such as tabouli, and does well with lamb. It also goes with [peas](#), zucchini, fresh beans, marinades for summer vegetables, cold soups, fruit salads, and cheese.



Credit: Anna Shepulova/Shutterstock

Tip! Make flavored ice cubes by freezing trays of strong mint tea, then use the ice cubes for your drinks!

HERBS

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Catherine Boeckmann



Catherine Boeckmann loves nature, stargazing, and gardening so it's not surprising that she and The Old Farmer's Almanac found each other. She leads digital content for the Almanac website, and is also a certified master gardener in the state of Indiana. [Read More from Catherine Boeckmann](#)

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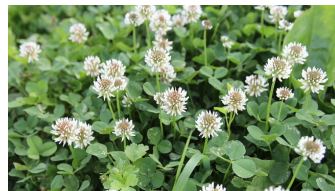
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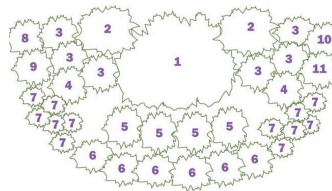
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COMMENTS

ADD A COMMENT

Kaye Blewett (not verified) 3 years 6 months ago

I am growing mint cuttings indoors in small 3" pots under a growing lamp so that I can have a regular supply throughout the winter. My query is that the leaves never get that large. Would I be better to move them to larger pots to achieve this?

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REPLY

Hassan (not verified) 2 years 9 months ago

I know mint well. My mother always used when i was young, and used to make Cheese from goat milk. Mint leaves used to add “
Dessert” to make good dessert. Dessert like cream

[REPLY](#)

Virginia Gallion (not verified) 3 years 9 months ago

how do I use chocolate mint,,,I have
it in large pot and it smells wonderful but I don't know
what to use it in or how to use it

[REPLY](#)

Holly (not verified) 11 months ago

I used to grow both chocolate mint and ste-
via. When I was working in the garden I
would take a leaf from both and eat them.
Nothing simpler, and so lovely! You can also
make an essence (flavoring) out of just about
any edible leaf, to use in baking, or some-
times I will use a few drops of essence to fla-
vor coffee.

[REPLY](#)

Lisa Duffy (not verified) 11 months ago

First thing that comes to my mind is putting
it in hot cocoa or on ice cream!! 🍷🍀🍷🍀

[REPLY](#)

Barb (not verified) 1 year 10 months ago

Chop it fine and put in your salad, along with shredded coconut, just be sparing with both.

REPLY

All American Amy (not verified) 1 year 10 months ago

I loved my chocolate peppermint! It hid well in brownies! (Moving meant giving the planter of it away, but what a treat!) Hopefully we can find a new one...

REPLY

Sherri M Damon (not verified) 3 years 9 months ago

Please add spider mites to your list of peppermint pests. They all but destroyed my once-bushy plants. I had to clip and root some healthy tops just to save them. I also must spray a rosemary oil-detergent-water mixture on the reviving stems still outside. <:-(

REPLY

Denise T (not verified) 3 years 9 months ago

Years ago a golf ball sized hole popped up overnight in

some such critter. I kicked some gravel into the hole and tamped it down. That worked for a day or two and then it reappeared. Since it was right near where I got out when I parked, I didn't want to turn my ankle or provide an open invitation for additional holes so I decided to pour some used kitty litter (no poops included) down the hole and covered it over again. It seemed to work but a similar hole appeared about six feet away. More litter and the critters got the idea until this year. This time instead of litter I crushed a few stalks of mint and shoved them down their doorway. It was never removed and I haven't seen any more holes anywhere. This wasn't a scientific survey by any means, but if you're having problems with diggers in your lawn or garden and have a supply of mint it's worth a try before using chemicals or nasty traps. This might make them move to a different area on your property, but if you have a supply of mint like I do it shouldn't be a problem driving the little monsters out of the back forty.

REPLY

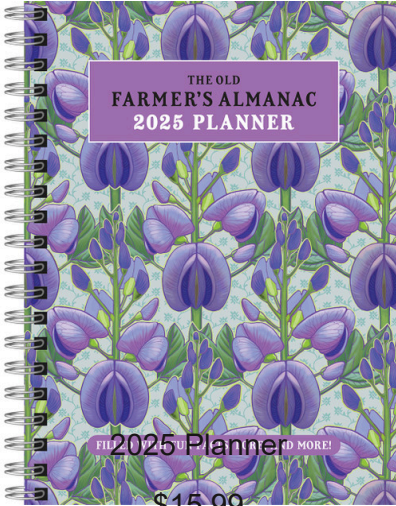
Elia R (not verified) 1 year 10 months ago

Mice hate mint. I put mint tea bags around the garage and spray with a mint detergent that I got on amazon. very effective, freshens the areas and I love peppermint tea.

REPLY

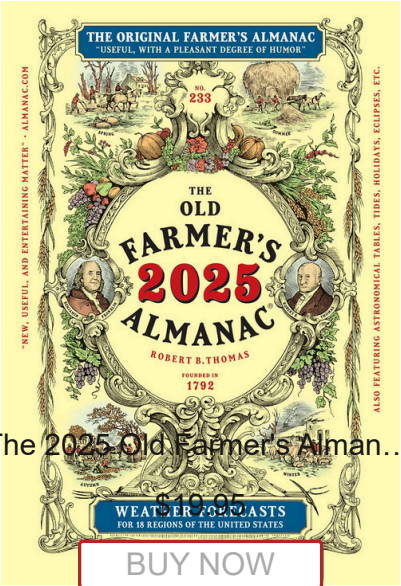
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