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How to Grow Tarragon Plants: The Complete Guide



Botanical Name:
Artemisia dracunculoides

Plant Type:
[Herb](#)

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Planting, Growing, and Harvesting Tarragon

By [Jennifer Keating](#)

Last Updated: April 18, 2025



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Tarragon is a perennial herb with long, light green leaves and tiny greenish or yellowish-white flowers. Here's how to grow tarragon in your herb garden!

About Tarragon

There are two main types of tarragon available: French tarragon (*Artemisia drunculus sativa*) and Russian tarragon

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the classic licorice flavor most associated with the herb. However, unlike its Russian counterpart, French tarragon doesn't produce viable seeds and is typically propagated through division or cuttings.

Russian tarragon, on the other hand, readily grows from seed and has a milder licorice taste.

For cooking, use French tarragon. Russian tarragon can easily be mistaken for French, but Russian tarragon is coarser and less flavorful than French tarragon.

Companion Planting Bonus: Consider planting tarragon near [tomatoes](#), [rosemary](#), or [sage](#). These herbs are said to improve each other's flavor. [Learn more about companion planting with herbs.](#)

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PLANTING

While Russian tarragon can be easily started from seed indoors 6-8 weeks before the last frost, French tarragon is best propagated from divisions or cuttings obtained from a mature plant.

Where to Plant Tarragon

Select a sunny spot with well-drained soil. Tarragon thrives in drier conditions and won't tolerate soggy roots. Tarragon isn't fussy about soil but prefers slightly alkaline to neutral soil (pH 6.5-7.5). Amending your planting area with some [compost](#) is beneficial.

If using divisions or cuttings, plant them in the spring after the last frost danger has passed. Space plants 24 inches apart. The plants should grow to around 2 or 3 feet in height.

For seeds, sow them indoors in pots filled with a seed-starting mix and transplant seedlings outdoors after hardening them off.

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GROWING

Tarragon is a relatively low-maintenance herb. To help keep your plants healthy, di-

or fall. New plants can grow from stem cuttings or root cuttings.

Here are some basic tips for keeping your plant happy and thriving.

Watering Tarragon

Water regularly during the first growing season, especially during hot and dry spells. Once established, tarragon is drought tolerant and requires minimal watering.

Fertilizing Tarragon

Avoid overfertilizing, as this can diminish the flavor of the leaves. A light application of compost in the spring is sufficient.

Pruning Tarragon

Regularly harvest the leaves throughout the growing season to encourage bushier growth. Pinch off any flower buds that appear to maintain optimal flavor. Be sure to

Overwintering Tarragon

If you live in a colder climate, be sure to put mulch around the plants in late fall in order to protect the roots during the winter.

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Types

- French tarragon, which goes great with meats, poultry, and seafood

HARVESTING

Feel free to harvest tarragon leaves

so snip them just above a node (leaf joint)
to encourage new growth.

Tarragon pairs beautifully with chicken,
fish, egg dishes, and sauces. It's also a
wonderful addition to marinades
and vinaigrettes.

Preserving Tarragon

To preserve your harvest, you can dry the
leaves or freeze them for later use. If left
to dry for too long, though, the leaves lose
their flavor, so be careful. As soon as the
leaves are dry, store them in airtight con-
tainers. [Learn how to preserve herbs.](#)

GARDENING PRODUCTS



PESTS/DISEASES

- Many rusts, including white rust
- Downy mildew
- Powdery mildew
- Various fungal leaf and stem diseases

WIT AND WISDOM

Put tarragon in your shoes before a long walk to give you strength.

HERBS

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jennifer Keating



Jennifer is the Digital Editor at The Old Farmer's Almanac. She is an active equestrian and spends much of her free time at the barn. When she's not riding, she loves caring for her collection of house plants, baking, and playing in her gardens. [Read More from Jennifer](#)

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COMMENTS

[ADD A COMMENT](#)**Kate (not verified)** 9 months 1 week ago

I live in zone 5, Southern Finland. My French tarragon stays out all winter, even at -25C. I don't cover it with anything and it's one of the first plants up every Spring. There's no reason to coddle it. It doesn't need fertilizer. I barely water it. It's about as independent a herb as you could ever hope for.

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[REPLY](#)**Hamid (not verified)** 2 years 2 months ago

what to feed tarragon ?

[REPLY](#)

Use a standard fertilizer made for foliar (leaf) growth. A “balanced” fertilizer will do.

REPLY

jinx (not verified) 9 years 11 months ago

I just started growing French Tarragon in a pot a month ago, but lately i noticed that the leaves on the bottom started to dry. And some of the stems turns yellow. What shall i do with that?

REPLY

The Editors 8 years 9 months ago

The only real disease that troubles tarragon is rust. What you described are not symptoms of rust. I suspect it is a water-related issue. It may need a little more than you are giving it. When you water, give it a good soak, then let it dry out before soaking it again (versus frequent shallow watering).

REPLY

VIVENCIO D. DE... (not verified) 8

years 9 months ago

My comment is like submitted by jink last May 17, 2015, why this happened?? thanks I hope you can answer and advised.

REPLY

Joseph Blair (not verified) 10 years ago

I grew tarragon from seed and used a fluorescent tube growing light.

REPLY

jrsweig (not verified) 10 years 10 months ago

Your probably growing Russian tarragon if you grew it from seed, not french, which has a better flavor...Russian tarragon is pretty much a weed

REPLY

EJ THOMAS (not verified) 10 years 10 months ago

is it safe to eat tarragon buds and flowers?

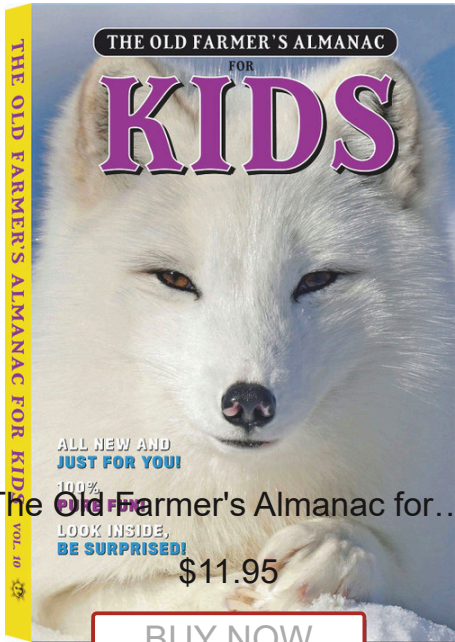
REPLY

The Editors 10 years 10 months ago

Hi, EJ: Like who knows how many things these days, tarragon has been found to possibly have carcinogenic and/or mutagenic effects in the lab (animals). The jury is still out, but it is very probable that even if this is true, you would have to ingest huge amounts of tarragon at every meal for the rest of your life (however abbreviated it may or may not be!) in order to be harmed. You do what you want. We eat them!

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