

Basil, rayhan

GENERAL

Origin	: sub-Mediterranean, Mediterranean, sub-tropical
Humidity	: semi-arid, semi-humid
Propagation	: direct sowing, sowing and pricking out
Maintenance	: moderate

CONDITIONS

Urban climate	: resistant
Dessication	: resistant
Stagnant water	: vulnerable
Irrigation	: medium
Salinity/ppm	: low (700 ppm)
Hardiness	: +3°C

SHAPE

Type	: annual, biennial, perennial
Height	: 0.3 m-0.6 m
Spread	: 0.2 m-0.4 m
Foliage	: deciduous

FLOWER

Colour	: white, pastel yellow
Size	: 0.5 cm - 0.8 cm
Period	: June - August
Smell	: aroma, strong, leaf, spicy

FRUIT

Type of fruit	: nutlet
Fruit size	: 0.1 cm
Toxicity	: edible, leaf

Ocimum basilicum is known by its common name Basil, or rayhan in Arabic. Its original distribution is from the Middle East to southeastern Europe and southwest Asia. Basil is an annual herb that can also enjoy a longer lifespan in regions with mild winters. It grows between 30 and 60 cm high, with a spread of up to 40 cm. The round leaves are highly aromatic. Normally, the leaves are fresh green, but there is a variety with a very attractive dark-red to purplish-red foliage named *Ocimum basilicum* ‘Purpurascens’. The flower appears in summer in spikes with white 0.5–0.8 cm single flowers. The flowers of ‘Purpurascens’ are a light violet. Basil prefers a moist soil with low salinity, but likes sunny locations with low air humidity. Basil is a very tasty herb, but its use can also be recommended in landscape design for private parks and gardens, container planting and public open spaces. As grouped or massed planting, groundcover, or as a hedge or undergrowth, it will have a pleasing visual appeal. Readily growing from seed, it is often found growing on footpaths near restaurants in many parts of Arriyadh: in Addiriyyah, it can be seen in several places as spontaneous vegetation in the undergrowth of shrubs. This would indicate that it could be used more often in the planting of public open spaces. Propagation is by direct seeding, sowing, and pricking. The level of maintenance depends on the location, which means that only low maintenance is necessary under optimal conditions. Regularly pruning promotes a dense growth.

