Tangerine Sage

Salvia elegans

Height: Up to 60 cm

Suitable for: Warm, sunny, well drained spot. Needs winter protection. Ideal in containers.

Summary: Tangerine Sage is a tender perennial herb with gloriously scented leaves and long spikes of bright scarlet flowers throughout the summer months. Great as a container plant and can be used in herb teas and also in salads and fruity drinks.

More information:

Tangerine Sage originates from the mountains of Central America and prefers a warmer climate than the UK winter. It can thrive in the ground in the south west of the UK if planted in a sheltered spot and protected from excessive wet in winter. Elsewhere it makes a great container plant which can be moved under cover in the winter months.

It is fast growing and the oval, pale green leaves have a wonderful scent of tangerine. By mid-summer the plants are covered with long spires of bright scarlet flowers, which open over a long period. Regular deadheading encourages repeat flowering all summer long.

Both the flowers and the leaves are edible. The younger foliage is best as the older leaves tend to be a bit fibrous. The leaves can be snipped into salads and also go well with both goats cheese and mozzarella. In addition they add a herby tangerine fragrance to fruit drinks and cocktails.

The flowers are stunning and can be used extensively as a bright red garnish to salads — both fruit and savoury — and also on homebaking strewn over the icing of cakes.

The fruity aroma of the Tangerine Sage leaves makes a great herb tea.

- Warm your cup first with hot water and pour away.
- Then add 4 – 5 leaves with water at about 85ºC (just cooler than boiling).
- Cover the cup with a saucer and steep for 3 minutes.
- Remove the leaves before drinking and garnish if you like with a few of the flowers.

The Tangerine Sage leaves blend well with the fresh taste of lemon balm, for tea with combined fruity flavours.

Tangerine Sage tea is also delicious served ice cold and garnished with a slice of fresh orange.