Lesser Calamint

Calamintha nepeta



Height: Up to 30cm (12 in)

Suitable for: Dry soil in sun or part shade.

Summary: Lesser calamint is a native perennial herb with fine upright stems, small dark green leaves and a strong peppermint fragrance. From August it is covered with a cloud of tiny pale lavender flowers which are especially attractive to bees.

More information:

This is an attractive, highly aromatic perennial herb which is ideal for any dry situation in a sunny border. It belongs to the mint family and each plant will spread a little by creeping rhizomes to make a wider bush but it is not invasive. It makes a lovely fragrant path edging where you can appreciate the minty fragrance as you brush past. It flowers late in the summer, generally from August onwards, and so contributes to the later flowers in the garden with a lovely cloud of pale lilac flowers which last right through until the first frosts.

This is a herb with both scented and medicinal uses. The fragrant flowers and leaves can be cut and dried to add to potpourri mixtures.

Medicinally the whole plant is harvested and used fresh or dry.

Historically calamint was a herb widely used in the pharmacopoeia of medieval times, but is rarely used by herbalists today. The medicinal uses, in times gone by, were internally for indigestion, nervous tension, depression and insomnia. The active ingredient is pulegone, as found in Pennyroyal, and as it has a stimulating effect on the uterus anyone who was pregnant avoided these preparations.

There are some suggestions to be found for culinary use of the leaves in salads and to flavour roast meat. However according to many sources it is not generally recognised as safe to use in cooking, **so culinary use is not to be recommended**.