Orange Mint

Mentha x piperata citrata



Height: 30 – 45 cm

Suitable for: Rich moist soil in sun. Ideal for containers.

Summary: Orange mint has highly aromatic foliage with notes of citrus and spice. The round green leaves are a striking green and contrast with the dark red stems. Ideal for growing in large containers which will curtail its spreading tendencies.

More information:

This is an easy to grow herb which thrives in rich moist soil and full sun or partial shade. The leaves are oval in shape and a bright green which contrasts with the red stems, and from mid to late summer spikes of white / pink flowers are produced.

Like many mints, orange mint spreads vigorously by runners both on and below the soil surface, making it an excellent plant to grow in a large container to curtail its spreading tendencies.

The foliage tends to be stronger in flavour and scent than many other mints — a slightly spicy citrus aroma which becomes even stronger when the foliage is bruised. If growing the mint for use in the kitchen, harvest whole stems from near the base of the plant to encourage new shoots.

It is believed that orange mint may have been one of the 130 secret ingredients in the original Chartreuse liqueur.

The flavour of the mint is best when it is used fresh:

- Chopped into fruit salads and added to couscous and bulgar salads;
- Finely chopped, it enhances dressings, sauces and flavoured vinegar;
- It's a great herb to use in tea, cocktails and home-made lemonade.

In summer when redcurrants are in season try and make our orange and redcurrant confit. It's a sharp relish, lovely with roasts of any sort and keeps for up to a week in the fridge. If you have plenty of redcurrants make a large batch and freeze in small containers to use throughout the year.

Orange and Redcurrant Confit



Makes a smallish jar.

500 g redcurrants — with their stalks removed
1 tsp olive oil
1 finely chopped onion
1 large orange
3 tbsp finely chopped orange mint
3 heaped tbsp sugar
150 ml white wine
3 tbsp white wine vinegar
salt and black pepper to taste

Gently fry the onion in the oil for 5 minutes or so until it softens but does not brown. Add the zest of the orange and its juice and half of the mint, reserving the other half to add at the end. Add all of the other ingredients and simmer uncovered on a moderate to low heat for about an hour. Keep an eye on the pan and give it a stir every 10 minutes or so.

The confit is ready when the juice has reduced to leave just a little in the bottom of the pan. Taste at this point and if you prefer a sweeter relish then stir in extra sugar a spoon at a time.

Stir in the remaining mint and leave to cool before serving. Once cool any extra can be frozen to use in

the future.

Medicinally a tisane from orange mint leaves was traditionally been used for digestive disorders, nervous conditions, fevers and headaches.

In common with other mints it is **not recommended for use in this way by pregnant women** as large doses may cause miscarriage.