Orange thyme

Thymus fragrantissimus



Height: 20cm

Suitable for: Dry sunny position in poor soil, mixed planting in containers

Summary: This is an upright bushy thyme with a delicious scent of orange. It has grey-green foliage and pretty pale pink flowers. As the earliest thyme to flower it makes an attractive and useful addition to any herb garden or container planting.

More information:

This lovely herb compliments our lemon thyme, with a citrus orange peel scent, and can be planted and used in much the same way.

In common with all the other thymes it likes lots of sunshine and a poor dry soil, these conditions give the best flavours and flowers, too much water can kill the plant. Of all the thymes, the pale pink flowers of orange thyme are the first to open in early summer and are soon covered in bees and early butterflies.

It is very versatile and can be planted in herb gardens and borders, rockeries and on the edge of paths. It works well planted with pale flowered dwarf lavenders such as the white Edelweiss or Rosea - the pink variety. It can also be planted with other thymes, both upright and creeping, to give a fragrant and colourful carpet throughout the year.

The whole plant is fragrant, both the fine leaves and the pink flowers are scented with orange and can be picked and dried as sprigs to add to pot pourri.

As well as perfuming the garden and the home, this is a great thyme to use in cooking. It can be used in the same way as other culinary thymes and is particularly good with fish, soups and stews, also in sweet dishes, herb teas and fruity chutney.

Roasted root vegetables

Choose a mix of veggies - carrots, swede, parsnips, squash and sweet potato all work well.

Peel and cut 500g into 2cm cubes and parboil for 5 minutes.

Drain and add to a roasting dish and toss with a large knob of butter, some ground black pepper and 2 tbs of chopped orange thyme leaves.

Sprinkle over 3 tbs orange juice and roast at 180°C for about 15 - 20 minutes, until the vegetables are tender and starting to brown.

If you want to preserve your orange thyme then it is best to harvest before flowering for the best flavour and aroma. Cut small bunches early in the day and dry in a warm dark place. Keep the whole leaves in jars and only crush just before use.