Pink Hyssop

Hyssopus officinalis



Height: Up to 60cm

Suitable for: Light well drained soil in full sun - edging and containers.

Summary: Hyssop is an attractive flowering shrubby herb which deserves greater popularity. It has scented green foliage and colourful pink flowers in late summer. An ideal plant for the herb garden or the border, and also very effective planted as a low growing hedge.

More information:

Hyssop is a highly flavoured aromatic perennial herb which is native to Mediterranean regions. In growth habit it is rather like a green leaved lavender, but looks far superior throughout the winter months — lavender can look rather tatty later in the year. It is invaluable as a late flowering perennial in the border and indeed, if the dead flower heads are promptly removed, it may continue flowering into November in a sheltered spot. The spikes of pink flowers are great to attract pollinators to the garden, they are especially attractive to bees and butterflies.

Hyssop is a welcome addition to the herb garden and also makes a pretty addition to any flower border. If planted at 30 cm spacing it makes an attractive informal hedge. More details in the article elsewhere in our website at www.manorfarmherbs.co.uk/ideas/hedging.

Plant hyssop in full sun in a reasonably well drained soil which has had some extra organic matter added — compost is ideal. Established plants should be trimmed back well in spring and again, lightly this time, after flowering to keep the plants compact and bushy.

Hyssop is a good companion plant in the vegetable plot. It is said to deter pests such as flea beetle and cabbage white butterflies, so plant a few amongst your brassicas and also with your rocket plants which can suffer badly from flea beetle each summer.

Young hyssop leaves can be harvested for use in the kitchen and are said to aid the digestion of rich and fatty foods. The young leaves are best used fresh and can be chopped and scattered onto salads, used to flavour soups, stews and fruit dishes and also add flavour to meat and oily fish recipes. Hyssop leaves are very aromatic and high in volatile oils with a strong and distinctive taste, use sparingly until you are happy with the flavour. The main commercial use is in the flavouring of liqueurs such as Chartreuse.

The sweetness of carrots combines well with the aromatic qualities of hyssop. Try this easy recipe to give your carrots a lift – serve with the Sunday roast. During the summer this is a really pretty dish made with the multicoloured heritage carrots which we grow ourselves.

Honeyed Carrots with Hyssop

500 g small carrots — thinly sliced
200 ml chicken or vegetable stock
1 tbsp honey
1 tbsp butter
Salt & pepper
1 tbsp chopped hyssop

In a small pan combine all the ingredients except the hyssop and simmer gently over a low heat until the carrots are tender. Remove the lid after 10 minutes so that the liquid reduces to a syrupy glaze. Add the finely chopped hyssop leaves and toss together before serving.