Hyssop white flowered

Hyssopus officinalis



Height: Up to 60cm (2ft)

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

Summary: Hyssop is a lesser known perennial herb which deserves greater popularity. It makes a small bush with scented, green foliage, and in the case of the white form, shining white spires of flowers in late summer. Ideal to plant in many situations in the garden.

More information:

Hyssop is a very under rated herb. It is a semi-evergreen perennial which is hardy and easy to grow. Resembling a green leaf lavender in form and, in this case, topped with shining spires of pure white flowers later in the summer.

Historically this native Mediterranean herb was thought to be holy and bunches were hung in the home to ward off the evil eye.

It will grow in most soils but thrives in lighter, alkaline soils in full sun, although it will tolerate partial shade.

The flowers are produced from August onwards and are much loved by bees due to the unusually large amounts of pollen that they produce.

Plants can be trimmed back immediately after flowering. They also respond to hard pruning but this is best left until Spring.

Hyssop of any flower colour makes an ideal small shrub for the herb garden or border. It can be grown as a low hedge, either of single or mixed colours. Plants should be spaced 30 cm apart.

Hyssop has been cultivated in the past mainly for medicinal reasons but the young leaves do have culinary uses in the kitchen.

The chopped leaves have a minty floral flavour — like a minty lavender — and can be incorporated into salads, and also used to flavour soups, braised meats and fruit desserts.

Remember the flavour of hyssop is very intense, use a little — you can always add more!

- Hyssop incorporates well into many vegetable dishes like ratatouille and roasted vegetables.
- Try substituting hyssop for some or all of the mint in lamb recipes.
- Use the crushed leaves in cocktails where you would normally use mint.
- Whole sprigs with a quartered lemon give a great flavour to chicken — insert into the cavity before roasting.
- The flowers make a lovely edible garnish to many dishes and they have a much more delicate flavour than the foliage.