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The Best of Every Season

Italian Large Leaf Sweet Basil

Ocimum basilicum 'Italian Large Leaf'



Italian Large Leaf Sweet Basil foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 3 feet

Spread: 24 inches

Spacing: 12 inches

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: (annual)

Description:

A large and vigorous herb producing aromatic, deep green leaves; great for containers, herb gardens, and beds; mild, citrusy flavor, perfect for Mediterranean dishes and sauces; remove flowers for continued leaf growth; prefers shade from afternoon sun

Edible Qualities

Italian Large Leaf Sweet Basil is an annual herb that is typically grown for its edible qualities, although it does have ornamental merits as well. The large fragrant pointy green leaves can be harvested at any time in the season. The leaves have a delicious taste and a pleasant fragrance.

The leaves are most often used in the following ways:

- Fresh Eating
- Cooking
- Drying
- Seasoning

Planting & Growing

Italian Large Leaf Sweet Basil will grow to be about 30 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 24 inches. When grown in masses or used as a bedding plant, individual plants should be spaced approximately 12 inches apart. Although it's not a true annual, this fast-growing plant can be expected to behave as an annual in our climate if left outdoors over the winter, usually needing replacement the following year. As such, gardeners should take into consideration that it will perform differently than it would in its native habitat.

This plant is quite ornamental as well as edible, and is as much at home in a landscape or flower garden as it is in a designated herb garden. It does best in full sun to partial shade. It prefers to grow in average to moist conditions, and shouldn't be allowed to dry out. This plant does not require much in the way of fertilizing once established. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This is a selected variety of a species not originally from North America. It can be propagated by cuttings; however, as a cultivated variety, be aware that it may be subject to certain restrictions or prohibitions on propagation.

Italian Large Leaf Sweet Basil is a good choice for the edible garden, but it is also well-suited for use in outdoor pots and containers. With its upright habit of growth, it is best suited for use as a 'thriller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination; plant it near the center of the pot, surrounded by smaller plants and those that spill over the edges. It is even sizeable enough that it can be grown alone in a suitable container. Note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.