

## Basil



*Lamiaceae Ocimum – variety of species*

### Properties:

- antibacterial
- anti-infectious
- anti-inflammatory
- antioxidant
- antiseptic
- antispasmodic
- antiviral
- decongestant
- stimulant

### Medicinal Uses:

- sinus and bronchial congestion
- dissolves phlegm and mucous
- cold and flu
- fever
- increase milk flow in nursing mothers
- mild sedative
- fatigue, clears the mind
- depression and anxiety
- insomnia
- cleanses and tones the digestive system
- upset tummy (any digestive complaint)
- nausea, vomiting, gas
- stomach Cramps
- soothes insect bites and stings (use fresh as a poultice)
- repels flies and insects

- purifies the air

### Methods of Use:

- pesto, use liberally in cooking dishes
- herbal tea
- herbal tincture
- vinegar tincture
- herbal infused oil
- herbal honey
- herbal butter
- herbal sprinkle
- bath and foot soak
- herbal sachets
- basil essential oil

### In the Garden:

Basil is quite easy to grow from seed or you can transplant them from a nursery. It will grow in almost any garden and there are many varieties to choose from.

- If starting from seed, start indoors 4-6 weeks before the last frost. Keep in a warm, sunny location. Basil loves it warm.
- Transplant outdoors 12" apart in full sun after the last frost. You can sow seeds directly into the garden after the last frost also, it will take 7-10 days to sprout.
- Water regularly.
- Pinch back stems regularly to keep your plant full, bushy and producing all season. Once the plant flowers it will go to seed and be done for the season.
- Companion plant next to peppers and tomatoes.
- To harvest cut leaves off the top of the plant throughout the growing season. At the end of the season cut the entire plant down to preserve for winter use. Basil is an annual so it will have to be planted each spring.

### Preserving Basil:

**Drying:** Basil can be dried but will lose much of its flavor and aroma so if you want to keep the flavor in tact, use one of the other methods. Dry as quickly as possible and only use the leaves that retain a healthy green color. If they turn dark or black the medicinal properties have been lost.

**Freezing:** There are two methods for freezing basil, first wash the leaves, dry with a towel and freeze them whole, wrapped in paper towels. You can also chop the leaves,



place in an ice cube tray and pour water over the top. Freeze, then pop out the cubes and store in a freezer bag.

**Pesto:** My favorite method for preserving and eating basil is by making pesto. I make big batches and freeze in ice cube trays. I use this all throughout the winter for a fresh from the garden basil taste and with all the medicinal properties of both the basil and the garlic.

½ cup olive oil

2 cups basil

1 cup leafy greens (kale, spinach, chard or other herbs of choice)

½ cup nuts (pine nuts, walnuts, pecans, almonds, etc.)

3 garlic cloves

½ teaspoon Real salt

¼ c. Parmesan cheese

Blend together in food processor or high powered blender (Blendtec or Vitamix) until chunky or smooth, depending on your preference.

Disclaimer: The Information contained on this handout is for educational purposes only and as a guideline for your personal use. It is not intended to replace the advice of a licensed physician, herbalist or other trained professional. Those who follow these suggestions do so at their own risk.