

PLANT PROFILE

Basil



Latin Name: Ocimum basilicum

Soil type: Fertile, free draining soil

Soil Ph: Slightly acidic

Aspect: Warm, sheltered but out of the midday sun

Hardiness: Basil is half hardy so should only be moved outside after the danger of frost has passed

Propagation: Best sown from seed indoors from mid-Feb to mid-summer to provide herbs into the autumn. Benefits from bottom heat to aid germination so use a propagator or plastic bag secured with an elastic band. Prick out into individual pots when seedlings are large enough to handle. Pot on when roots appear through the drainage holes.

Maintaining: Pinch out the tips of branches regularly and remove any flowers that start to develop to encourage the plant to bush out

Harvesting: Remove leaves as required

Storage: Store leaves in the fridge for up to three days or stand cut stems in a glass of water ready to use. To freeze basil, chop the leaves and place them in an ice-cube tray, cover with water and pop in the freezer. Use within five months.

Other characteristics: Keep soil moist but avoid roots becoming sodden

Pests: Aphids, slugs and snails

Disease: Botrytis (powdery mould)

Uses: The leaves can be used in cooking or as a garnish

[How to Grow Basil - BBC Gardeners' World Magazine](#)