

APOTHECARY GARDEN PROJECT

Foeniculum vulgare



Common Name: Fennel.

Type of Plant? (e.g. annual, shrub etc) Perennial herb.

Size of the Plant when mature: Up to 2.5m in height.

Where is the plant native to? The Mediterranean.

Soil Ph: Neutral, Alkaline.

What are the ideal growing conditions for this plant? (e.g. soil conditions, temperature):

Open, sunny sites on well-drained, fertile soil.

When is the best time to propagate this plant? Spring.

What is the best way to propagate this plant?

Sow in small pots or modules under cover, or in mid-spring direct where it is to grow.

What is the perceived health/medicinal benefits of this plant?

Fennel is an aromatic herb with a mild aniseed flavour.

Fennel can: aid digestion, refresh breath, treat coughs, ease symptoms of colic & menstrual cramps, improve blood flow, lower cholesterol, and act as an insect repellent.

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Foeniculum vulgare (cont.)



Are there any Negative effects of this Plant?

Fennel may cause allergic reactions, interact with seizure medications, and reduce the effectiveness of some forms of birth control, not advised for oestrogen sensitive cancers, pregnant and breast-feeding women should avoid.

Is there any Folklore associated with this Plant?

Since Ancient times fennel has been a symbol of courage. Roman gladiators were known to eat the seeds to give them that extra boost of courage before entering the arena.

The Greek name for fennel is *marathon* or *marathos* a fennel tea was believed to give courage to the warriors prior to battle.

In ancient Greece people wore crowns of Fennel and ate Fennel seeds whilst worshipping Dionysus, Greek God of wine and fertility. Fennel is still said to be an aphrodisiac.

During the Middle Ages in Europe fennel was used to keep the ghosts from entering the home on Midsummer night's eve.