

Common Name	Aniseed
Family	Apiaceae or Umbelliferae
Synonyms	Synonyms
Known Hazards	None known
Habitats	Not known in a truly wild situation.
Range	S. Europe - Greece.
Edibility Rating	very useful plants
Medicinal Rating	could be grown as standard
Care	   



Summary

Physical Characteristics

ANNUAL growing to 0.5 m (1ft 8in) by 0.2 m (0ft 8in). It is hardy to zone 8 and is frost tender. It is in leaf 10-May It is in flower in July, and the seeds ripen from Aug to September. The flowers are hermaphrodite (have both male and female organs) and are pollinated by Insects. The plant is self-fertile.

The plant prefers light (sandy) and medium (loamy) soils and requires well-drained soil. The plant prefers acid, neutral and basic (alkaline) soils..It cannot grow in the shade. It requires dry or moist soil.

Habitats

Cultivated Beds;

Edible Uses

Edible Parts: **Condiment** ; **Leaves**; **Seed**; **Tea**.

Young leaves - raw or cooked[2, 14, 21, 37, 52]. The leaves have a sweet aniseed flavour, they are very refreshing to chew and are also nice as a flavouring in salads, puddings, soups, stews etc[183, K]. When adding to cooked dishes, only add the leaves for the last few minutes of the cooking or the flavour will be lost[K]. The aromatic seed is eaten raw or used as a flavouring in raw or cooked foods such as soups, pies, bread and cakes[2, 14, 20, 21, 27, 37, 244]. A distinctive sweet liquorice flavour[183], its use improves the body's ability to digest food[244]. The seed is harvested by cutting the whole plant when the seed is ripe. The plants are then kept in a warm, dry position for a week and then threshed to remove the seeds. Store the seeds in the dark in an airtight jar[244]. An essential oil from the seed is used as a food flavouring in sweets (especially aniseed balls) ice cream, chewing gum, pickles etc[57, 183, 238]. It is also often used to flavour alcoholic drinks such as pernod, ouzo and anisette[238, 244]. The leaves and the seeds can be brewed into a sweet liquorice-like tea[183].

Medicinal Uses

Plants For A Future can not take any responsibility for any adverse effects from the use of plants. Always seek advice from a professional before using a plant medicinally

Antiseptic; Antispasmodic; Aromatic; Carminative; Digestive; Expectorant; Galactagogue; Pectoral; Stimulant; Stomachic Tonic.

Aniseed has a delicious sweet liquorice-like flavour and is a commonly used and very safe herbal remedy that is well suited for all age groups from children to the elderly. However, its use has declined in recent years with the advent of cheaper substitutes such as *Illicium verum* and synthetic substances[238]. It is a particularly useful tonic to the whole digestive system and its antispasmodic and expectorant effects make it of value in the

treatment of various respiratory problems[254]. The seed is the part used, generally in the form of an extracted essential oil[4]. The essential oil comprises 70 - 90% anethole, which has an observed oestrogenic effect whilst the seed is also mildly oestrogenic[254]. This effect may substantiate the herb's use as a stimulant of sexual drive and of breast-milk production[254]. The essential oil should not be used internally unless under professional supervision whilst the seeds are best not used medicinally by pregnant women, though normal culinary quantities are quite safe[254]. The seed is antiseptic, antispasmodic, aromatic, carminative, digestive, expectorant, pectoral, stimulant, stomachic and tonic[4, 9, 14, 20, 21, 46, 165, 201]. It is of great value when taken internally in the treatment of asthma, whooping cough, coughs and pectoral affections as well as digestive disorders such as wind, bloating, colic, nausea and indigestion[4, 254]. Externally it is used to treat infestations of lice, scabies and as a chest rub in cases of bronchial disorders[238]. A strong decoction of the seeds can be applied externally to swollen breasts or to stimulate the flow of milk[244].

Other Uses

; Insecticide; Pot-pourri; Repellent; TeethEssential

An essential oil is obtained from the seed, used in perfumery, tooth pastes, medicinally and as a food flavouring[57, 238]. The powdered seed can be used as a dentrifice and mouthwash[201]. The plant is an ingredient of pot-pourri. The plant can be used as an insect repellent but it is also said to attract mice[14]. If aniseed oil is liberally smeared around live-traps it can attract mice and other rodents into them[4, 201]. The plants seem to be immune to the predations of slugs and snails and can help to protect neighbouring plants[201]. A spray made by boiling of one part coriander leaves and one part anise seeds in two parts of water is very effective against red spider mites and woolly aphids[201].

Cultivation details

Succeeds in ordinary garden soil[1] but prefers a fairly rich warm well-drained light soil in a sunny position[1, 27, 37, 52]. Prefers a pH in the range 6 to 7.5[238]. Aniseed has a very long history of herbal and culinary use, and is often cultivated for its edible and medicinal seed in warm temperate zones[46, 244]. The plant needs warm summers if it is to grow well and seeds only ripen in Britain in long warm summers[4, 37, 200]. Plants strongly resent root disturbance and should not be transplanted. A good companion plant in the garden, its aromatic nature helping to keep nearby plants free of aphids etc. Its flowers attract parasitic wasps to the garden and these prey on a large number of garden pests[238]. Aniseed grows especially well with coriander[18, 20, 201].

Propagation

Seed - sow mid to late spring in situ. This sowing only succeeds in producing a crop of ripe seeds in years when the summers are hot[238]. A more certain crop (but much more labour intensive) can be obtained by sowing 4 - 5 seeds per pot in a greenhouse in early spring. They should germinate within 3 weeks. Thin if necessary to the best seedling and plant them out after the last expected frosts[K]. Aniseed strongly resents root disturbance.