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: 10a

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 a perennial 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

Features & Attributes

Italian Large Leaf Sweet Basil features showy spikes of white flowers rising above the foliage in mid summer. Its attractive fragrant pointy leaves remain green in color throughout the season.

This is an herbaceous perennial herb with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its medium texture blends into the garden, but can always be balanced by a couple of finer or coarser plants for an effective composition. This is a high maintenance plant that will require regular care and upkeep. Trim off the flower heads after they fade and die to encourage more blooms late into the season. It is a good choice for attracting bees, butterflies and hummingbirds to your yard, but is not particularly attractive to deer who tend to leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Aside from its primary use as an edible, Italian Large Leaf Sweet Basil is sutiable for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- Border Edging
- General Garden Use
- Herb Gardens
- Container Planting

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. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 1 years. As an herbaceous perennial, this plant will usually die back to the crown each winter, and will regrow from the base each spring. Be careful not to disturb the crown in late winter when it may not be readily seen!

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.