Basil

Ocimum basilicum

Plant + grow

Herb profile



Life cycle
Tender annual

Culinary part
Leaves

Sweet basil is the baseline.

Growing conditions

Direct sun
`6+ hours/day`
Give leaves room to dry.

Soil
Moist + drained
Avoid waterlogged roots.

Plants
`30 cm apart`
12 in.

Rows
`45 cm apart`
18 in.

Match the cultivar to your climate and space.

Planting

1. **Choose healthy stock**
   Prefer a downy-mildew-resistant cultivar.
2. **Wait for warmth**
   Sow or transplant after frost.
3. **Set with space**
   Do not crowd neighboring plants.
4. **Water roots**
   Moisten soil without soaking foliage.

Use packet depth and local season cues.

Plant care

Pinch stem tips
Encourage several short leafy branches.

Remove flower tips
Keep leaf production going longer.

Water consistently
Avoid drought and pooling water.

Feed lightly
Excess growth can reduce flavor.

Adjust watering to the soil and growing season.

⚠ Grow correctly labeled culinary plants; no wild-plant identification.

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Harvest + use

Harvest + storage

First leaves
Often ready around 6 weeks after planting.

Cut above a node
Leave healthy foliage to regrow.

For drying
Pick before flowers fully open.

Preserve surplus
Freeze or dry using a verified herb method.

Cold-sensitive; protect living plants from chilly weather.

Culinary use

Fresh leaves
Add to tomato dishes.

At serving
Use tender leaves as a finishing herb.

Fresh or dried
Choose the form a recipe specifies.

Herb oils
Never improvise shelf-stable fresh-herb oil.

Adapt to the named variety and local conditions.

Food safety

Cultivated food only
Use correctly labeled culinary plants and edible parts.

Clean before use
Rinse under running water; use clean hands and tools.

Reject spoilage
Discard moldy or rotten leaves and seeds.

Chopped herbs
Chill to ≤4°C / 40°F within 2 h; 1 h above 32°C / 90°F.

Culinary amounts; no medicinal or essential-oil instructions.

Plant problems

Yellowing leaves
Inspect undersides for gray downy growth.

Confirmed mildew
Remove affected plants; choose resistant replacements.

Chewed leaves
Inspect for Japanese beetles before acting.

Flowering early
Pinch flower tips to extend leaf picking.

Check the cause before choosing a treatment.

⚠ Culinary use only; do not improvise medicinal or essential-oil preparations.