



The Herb Society of America

Promising Plants Profiles

Origanum xmajoricum

Common Name: Italian oregano, hardy marjoram

Family: Lamiaceae

Genus: *Origanum*

Specific Epithet: *xmajoricum*

Life cycle: perennial

Zone: 6-9

Flower color: white to off-white

Bloom time: early summer to fall

Growth: 12-18 in.

Habit/Form: clumping, upright, mounding

Light requirements: full sun

Soil requirements: well-drained, loose soil, prefers slightly alkaline

Propagation: sterile hybrid, grow from cuttings or by division, may occasionally set seed

Uses: culinary, medicinal, ornamental

Other details: milder in flavor than Greek oregano



Photo courtesy of Henry Flowers

Description: Hybrid resulting from a cross between sweet majoram (*O. majorana*) and wild majoram (*O. vulgare*) Small, light-green, fragrant leaves with spikes of tiny white to off-white flowers.

Cultivation: Grows in a warm, dry, well-drained soil. Plant in full sun, but it will tolerate a small amount of shade. Pinch back before flowering to encourage bushy growth habit.

“Origanum xmajoricum, is the “real” one. It is sold as Origanum xmajoricum ‘Hilltop,’ which is shortened from the name O. xmajoricum ‘Hilltop Herb Farm,’ which it was given after Rex Talbert brought it to Madalene Hill some 40 years ago. This fine oregano plant came from a California nursery in Redwood City. This sterile hybrid is probably a cross between sweet marjoram (O. majorana), for flavor, and wild oregano (O. vulgare), for hardiness. It has some of the characteristic sweetness of marjoram and retains much of the punch of Greek oregano, too. This is the best all-purpose oregano. It is upright with medium green leaves and is 18 to 24 inches tall. The plants form clumps and do not spread. The one typically found in nurseries today is the flavorless O. vulgare. Good cooks should be able to find the real thing and good gardeners will quickly find it; use your nose.” - Gloria McClure, Promising Plants Presentation, 2008.

Please note: Profiles are intended to provide a brief introduction to each herb. For additional information, please refer to the References and Seed and Plant Source lists.

Disclaimer: The Herb Society of America can not advise, recommend, or prescribe herbs for medicinal use. Please consult a health care provider before pursuing any herbal treatments. Inclusion of vendor information does not indicate an endorsement by The Herb Society of America, and HSA can not guarantee availability of seeds/plants.

Text and images © 2008 The Herb Society of America

