



The Herb Society of America

Promising Plants Profiles

Zingiber officinale

Genus: *Zingiber*

Specific Epithet: *officinale*

Common Names: ginger, garden ginger, common ginger, Canton ginger

Family: Zingiberaceae (ginger)

Flower Color: yellow-green with purple and yellow lip

Form: perennial

Hardiness Zone: 7

Height: 5'

Soil: rich, well-drained soil

Sun: sun or partial shade

Uses: culinary, medicinal, economic, ornamental



“Yes, this is a common herb readily available fresh in almost every grocery store, but sadly one not often grown in gardens. This herb is one of the few that will thrive in a shady place and rewards the gardener with lots of product at the end of the season if they have a good rich soil. In late winter or early spring, purchase or select from your own storage a large "hand" (referring to a large clump of the rhizomatous roots) of ginger that is plump and has many eyes – similar to eyes of a potato. Plant them in a pot and get them started early if you live in a northern climate. If in [USDA] zone 7 and south, they can be planted directly outdoors [and the plants can overwinter in the ground]. Many suppliers sell hands of ginger, though I buy mine from my local grocery store.

During the growing season ginger makes a striking foliage plant and a wonderful contrast to other plants. In southern zones that have a long growing season, ginger may send up a short, inconspicuous flower stalk. The reward of growing ginger comes in the autumn when large, fresh hands of ginger can be dug to be used all winter long. If stored in a cool, slightly humid space, the hands can last almost all winter. Like other garden herbs and produce, fresh ginger from the garden tastes much better than that found in stores. Ginger is great for making teas, settling an upset stomach, or for flavorful ginger snaps.” – James Adams, Curator of the National Herb Garden, Promising Plants Presentation, 2003

Photo by James Adams

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