

Did You Know?



Peppermint *Mentha ×piperita*

- Peppermint is a hybrid of spearmint (*M. spicata*) and watermint (*M. aquatica*).
- Peppermint does not produce seeds, but as a vigorous grower, it is propagated by cutting or division. It spreads by stolons (underground stems).
- This mint prefers to grow in moist, rich soil in full sun or partial shade, though it is tolerant of a wide variety of growing conditions. Gardeners are often cautioned to grow all mints in containers to avoid spread to contain its robust growth.
- While many varieties exist, the cultivar 'Mitcham' is most often grown commercially. 'Crispa' is another popular cultivar.
- Peppermint is known for having a stronger flavor than spearmint, which has a lower menthol content and is therefore sweeter.
- Culinary uses for peppermint include tea, chewing gum, candy, ice cream, and other sweets including adding to chocolate. It can be added to other foods as well, but can overpower due to the higher menthol content.
- The menthol in peppermint is used in medicinal preparations, including pain relief ointments due to the cooling sensation on sore muscles. Peppermint has also been used to provide relief for sore throats and to ease digestive issues.
- Peppermint is also used in toothpaste, mouthwash, shampoo, soaps, shaving cream and other cosmetics.
- The genus *Mentha* or *Menthe* comes from the Greek mythological water nymph who was turned into the mint plant by Persephone as revenge for her affair with Hades. Hades, also known as Pluto to the Greeks was Persephone's husband.
- A lotion with crushed mint leaves for after bathing was used by the ancient Greeks and Egyptians had cosmetic uses for mint as well. Wreathes made of mint were worn on the heads of ancient Romans.

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