



BASIL

Basil is the classic Italian herb of summer. They love sun and heat, so find a bright, sheltered place in your garden or for your containers, and you'll be rewarded with a season of flavor. Remember to dry some, so you'll have its sunny taste to enjoy all year round.

PLANTING:

Prepare the soil for your beds or containers by adding a generous helping of compost. The better the soil, the healthier your garden will be!

Late May, early June is an ideal time to plant, and you can add Basil any time in summer. Basil is tender, so if you have a cloche or cold frame, use it to protect plants until nights are consistently above 50 degrees.

Incorporate a granular organic fertilizer into the soil where you are placing your transplant, making sure you go down at least 12". When planting, gently loosen the root ball. This allows the roots to become well established. If the root ball is tight and crowded, carefully cut 1/4 inch off the bottom.

Space plants about 12-14" apart. Firm the soil gently around your transplants, and water in well.

Basil is a heavy feeder, so fertilize monthly with a liquid high nitrogen organic fertilizer, to encourage growth and root development. Add a granular balanced organic fertilizer into the soil again, when you see flowers start to form. Water regularly, especially in the dry summer months.

GROWING TIPS:

When your plants are 6" tall, pinch growing tips to encourage bushiness. Also, remove flowers when they appear, so your plant's focus is on leaf production.

HARVESTING:

Harvest regularly at the leaf node, leaving 4 sets of leaves below, so your Basil has the energy to grow back. The fresh leaves are perfect for making your own Pesto, or pair them with home grown tomatoes and fresh mozzarella, in a Caprese Salad, or on a Margarita Pizza!

Harvest healthy stems for drying just before flowering, when oils are most flavorful. Hang in small bunches, upside down, in a well ventilated, dark space.