

## Tulsi - Holy Basil - *Ocimum tenuiflorum*

A significant addition to any edible garden, Holy basil or Tulsi (aka *O. sanctum*) is an herb that has many adaptogenic benefits. All parts of the holy basil plant act as an adaptogen. An adaptogen is a natural substance that helps the body adapt to stress and promotes mental balance.

The concept of an adaptogen is a holistic approach. However, holy basil has pharmacological properties to help the mind and body manage physical, chemical, and emotional stress by restoring balance, supporting nervous system health, reducing anxiety, and improving cognitive function.

Long revered in Ayurveda, Tulsi acts as a tonic to lower stress levels and boost overall wellness. It has been grown in India since ancient times and used medicinally as an immune enhancing, antifungal and antibacterial medicinal herb. In the Ayurveda system tulsi is often referred to as an "Elixir of Life" for its healing powers and has been known to treat many different common health conditions.



Over the centuries, Tulsi has been adopted into lifestyle practices that provide a vast array of health benefits that are just beginning to be confirmed by modern science. From Ayurveda to Unani to Modern medicine, Tulsi and its extracts have been used as an active ingredient in making healing and immunity boosting medicines that help regulate cortisol levels, improve resilience and promote detoxification. Tulsi has been the subject of numerous scientific studies and its pharmacological and wide range of therapeutic applications are the subject of more than one hundred publications during the last decade alone. Studies show it contains compounds that reduce inflammation, support liver and joint health, help manage blood sugar and have anticarcinogenic effects

Holy Basil is a very aromatic plant that produces sweet tasting foliage commonly consumed as a calming tea many call "liquid yoga" or taken as a dietary supplement in capsules or tinctures. It is often recommended to be consumed daily over a long period to gain maximum benefit. It is also frequently used in Thai cooking. As with any herb, over consumption is not advised.



*Ocimum tenuiflorum* grows as a compact, green leaved holy basil native throughout subtropical and tropical Asian geographies. It is the most frequently grown of the holy basil types, is easy to grow and works well in container gardens. Plants grow up to two feet tall and are typically grown as annuals in most temperate climates, but the perennial nature of the plant means it can overwinter in warmer winter climates (Zone 10 and above). Once established, it is known to readily self seed in the Keys, easily producing an abundance of plants to share.

As its name hints, Tulsi is considered a sacred herb in India that is dear to Krishna and often used in ritual offerings. According to religious beliefs, planting Tulsi and worshiping it brings prosperity and happiness in the family. Watering Tulsi is said to destroy more karma that can be accumulated in a lifetime and promote spiritual well being. Om tat sat.

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