PLANT FACT SHEET

Thymus vulgaris L.

GENUS *Thymus* **FAMILY** Lamiaceae

COMMON NAMES Thyme, Common thyme, English thyme, French thyme

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Herb, Spice, Flowers, Leaves - tea

The leaves and flowers are used as a seasoning to flavour foods. They are used fresh or dried. They are used to flavour stuffings, fish, meat, cheese, vinegar and gravy.
They are added to the brine in which olives are pickled.
It is used in soup that contains eggs and bread soaked in olive oil.
The fresh or dried leaves can be used for tea.
Young shoots are used as a garnish.

DESCRIPTION

A low shrub. It grows to 20 cm tall and spreads to 30 cm across. It forms a bushy cushion. It keeps growing from year to year. It is an evergreen with woody grey roots. The branches are square in cross section and hairy. The leaves are very small and greenish grey. They do not have leaf stalks and are produced opposite one another. The leaves are 0.6-1.5 cm long. The edges of the leaves curl backwards and the underside of the leaves is very hairy. The flowers are pale mauve or purple. They form tubes with two lips. The flowers occur in rings towards the end of the branches. The plant has a sweet smell.

HABITAT

A Mediterranean plant. It does best in dry arid places. Plants are occasional in the highlands in the tropics. They grow up to 2600 m altitude. It will grow on most soils and in most locations. It is resistant to drought and frost. They need sun. It suits plant hardiness zones 7-10. In Hobart Botanical gardens.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It can be grown from seeds or by cuttings or by dividing up an established plant. Cutting tips off plants often will encourage a bushy growth.

Harvesting and Seed Production

The leaves are used as a seasoning and dried and stored. They are dried in the shade with warmth and low humidity.

NOTES

There are between 300 and 400 Thymus species.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

REFERENCES

Aceituno-Mata, L., et al, 2021, The Persistence of Flavor: Past and Present Use of Wild Food Plants in Sierra Norte de Madrid, Spain. Front. Sustain. Food Syst., 11 January 2021

Ambasta, S.P. (Ed.), 2000, The Useful Plants of India. CSIR India. p 638

Arora, R. K., 2014, Diversity in Underutilized Plant Species - An Asia-Pacific Perspective. Bioversity International. p 109

Aziz, M. A., et al, 2022, The nexus between traditional foraging and its sustainability: a qualitative assessment among a few selected Eurasian case studies. Environment, Development and Sustainability. Springer.

Benitez, G., et al, 2023, Wild Edible Plants of Andalusia: Traditional Uses and Potential of Eating Wild in a Highly Diverse Region. Plants 2023, 12, 1218 p 22

Bianchini, F., Corbetta, F., and Pistoia, M., 1975, Fruits of the Earth. Cassell. p 200

Blamey, M and Grey-Wilson, C., 2005, Wild flowers of the Mediterranean. A & C Black London. p 398

Bodkin, F., 1991, Encyclopedia Botanica. Cornstalk publishing, p 983

Bonet, M. A. & Valles, J., 2002, Use of non-crop food vascular plants in Montseny biosphere reserve (Catalonia, Iberian Peninsula). International Journal of Food Sciences and Nutrition (2002) 53, 225–248

Bremness, L., 1994, Herbs. Collins Eyewitness Handbooks. Harper Collins. p 133

Brickell, C. (Ed.), 1999, The Royal Horticultural Society A-Z Encyclopedia of Garden Plants. Convent Garden Books. p 1011

Cheifetz, A., (ed), 1999, 500 popular vegetables, herbs, fruits and nuts for Australian Gardeners. Random House p 161

Cundall, P., (ed.), 2004, Gardening Australia: flora: the gardener's bible. ABC Books. p 1416

Esperanca, M. J., 1988. Surviving in the wild. A glance at the wild plants and their uses. Vol. 2. p 287

Facciola, S., 1998, Cornucopia 2: a Source Book of Edible Plants. Kampong Publications, p 137

Fox, F. W. & Young, M. E. N., 1982, Food from the Veld. Delta Books. p 247

French, B.R., 1986, Food Plants of Papua New Guinea, A Compendium. Asia Pacific Science Foundation p 388

Gras, A., et al, 2021, The Power of Wild Plants in Feeding Humanity: A Meta-Analytic Ethnobotanical Approach in the Catalan Linguistic Area. Foods 2021, 10,61.

Hadfield, J., 2001, The A-Z of Vegetable Gardening in South Africa. Struik p 136

Hedrick, U.P., 1919, (Ed.), Sturtevant's edible plants of the world. p 650

Hemphill, I, 2002, Spice Notes. Macmillan. p 391

Hibbert, M., 2002, The Aussie Plant Finder 2002, Florilegium. p 299

Hu, Shiu-ying, 2005, Food Plants of China. The Chinese University Press. p 658

Jackes, D. A., 2007, Edible Forest Gardens

Janaćković, P. et al, 2019, Traditional knowledge on plant use from Negotin Krajina (Eastern Serbia): An ethnobotanical study. Indian Journal of Traditional Knowledge Vol 18 (1), pp 25-33

Kapelle, M., et al, 2000, Useful plants within a Campesino Community in a Costa Rican Montane Cloud Forest. Mountain Research and Development, 20(2): 162-171

Kew Plants of the World Online

Kiple, K.F. & Ornelas, K.C., (eds), 2000, The Cambridge World History of Food. CUP p 434, 1869

Kybal, J., 1980, Herbs and Spices, A Hamlyn Colour Guide, Hamlyn Sydney p 192

Lawton, B.P., 2002, Mints. A Family of Herbs and Ornamentals. Timber Press, Portland, Oregon. p 214

Lazarides, M. & Hince, B., 1993, Handbook of Economic Plants of Australia, CSIRO. p 236

Martin, F.W. & Ruberte, R.M., 1979, Edible Leaves of the Tropics. Antillian College Press, Mayaguez, Puerto Rico. p 102, 196

Michael, P., 2007, Edible Wild Plants and Herbs. Grub Street. London. p 241

Miguel, E., et al, 1989, A checklist of the cultivated plants of Cuba. Kulturpflanze 37. 1989, 211-357

Motti, R., et al, 2022, Edible Flowers Used in Some Countries of the Mediterranean Basin: An Ethnobotanical Overview. Plants. 2022, 11, 3272

Mulherin, J., 1994, Spices and natural flavourings. Tiger Books, London. p 100

Nassif, F., & Tanji, A., 2013, Gathered food plants in Morocco: The long forgotten species in Ethnobotanical Research. Life Science Leaflets 3:17-54

Onuminya, T. O., et al, 2017, Comparative proximate and Phytochemical Analysis of leafy vegetables in Lagos State. Nig. J. Pure and Applied Sci. Vol. 30 Issue 3: p 3097f

Peter, K. V. (Ed.), 2004, Handbook of Herbs and Spices Vol. 2 Woodhead Publishing and CRC Press.

Plants for a Future database, The Field, Penpol, Lostwithiel, Cornwall, PL22 0NG, UK. http://www.scs.leeds.ac.uk/pfaf/

Plants of Haiti Smithsonian Institute http://botany.si.edu/antilles/West Indies

Purseglove, J.W., 1968, Tropical Crops Dicotyledons, Longmans. p 636

Rigat, M et al, 2009, Ethnobotany of Food Plants in the High River Ter Valley (Pyrenees, catalonia, Iberian Peninsula): Non-Crop Food Vascular Plants and Crop Food Plants with medicinal Properties. Ecology of Food and Nutrition, 48:303-327

Ruiters-Welcome, A. K., 2019, Food plants of southern Africa. Ph.D. thesis. Univ. of Johannesburg p 72

Salehi, F., 2022, Botanical Study of Wild food plants in Kurdistan, Iran. Master's thesis. Universita Ca'Foscari Venezia.

Sp. pl. 2:591. 1753

Full reference list (13 more) at https://www.echocommunity.org/en/resources/78c86c15-c6f9-403e-b38f-6aca9c492cac

PROVIDED BY **Food Plants International**

French, B.R. & Maynard, A.R. Food Plants International Database. Food Plants International

LICENCE CC BY-NC-SA 3.0

ONLINE FACT SHEET https://www.echocommunity.org/en/resources/78c86c15-c6f9-403e-b38f-6aca9c492cac