



PLANT FACT SHEET

Ocimum tenuiflorum L.

GENUS *Ocimum* FAMILY Lamiaceae

COMMON NAMES Holy basil, Bush tea leaf, Sacred Basil

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves for tea, Herb, Seeds, Spice, Flowers

The soft seeds when soaked in water give a drink.

The leaves are used for flavouring. They are used to flavour fruit jellies, sweet breads and preserves.

The fresh leaves can be added to salads.

They are also used as a substitute for tea.

The flowers are eaten.

DESCRIPTION

A small herb. It keeps growing from year to year. It grows to 70-100 cm high. It has a sprawling suckering habit. There are many branches and they are soft and pithy. It is branched. The base is woody. The leaf stalk is 1-2.5 cm long. The leaf blade is oblong and 2.5-5.5 cm long by 1-3 cm wide. It is hairy. The edges can be wavy or have teeth. The flowers are very small and white. They occur among calyxes along an erect stalk at the ends of the plant. The nutlets are brown and oval. They are about 1 mm long by 0.7 mm wide.

HABITAT

It is a warm temperate plant. It needs a sunny sheltered position. Soil should be kept moist. In Asia it grows up to 600 m altitude. In China it grows in dry sandy areas. It can grow in arid places. In Hobart Botanical gardens. It suits hardiness zones 9-10.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It is grown from seed. Seeds are sown directly.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Leaves suffer cold injury if stored below 12°C after harvest.

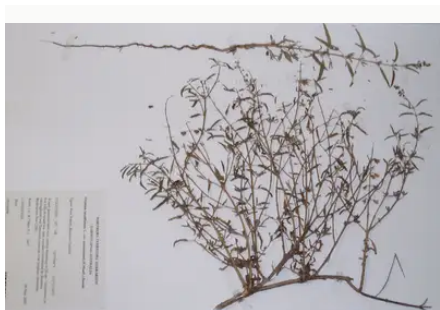
NOTES

There are between 100 and 150 *Ocimum* species. It has anticancer properties.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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