

Tarragon

Artemesia dracunculus

- While the exact origin of the name remains a mystery, *draccunculus* means little dragon. One theory is that it was used to fight off dragons in the Middle Ages. Another theory suggests that the name refers to the shape of the roots.
- French tarragon, designated by the cultivar 'Sativa', has an anise or basil-like flavor and is typically the variety used in cooking.
- French tarragon is well known for adding flavor to eggs, poultry and fish. The versatile tarragon flavor also pairs well with fruit such as strawberries, mustards in salad dressings or on chicken and is a primary ingredient in Béarnaise sauce.
- French tarragon does not produce seed and is propagated by cuttings or divisions.
- Russian tarragon produces seed and has a fragrance described as balsamic leather.
- Mexican tarragon, *Tagetes lucida*, is actually in the marigold family. It is often substituted for French tarragon and is said to have a stronger flavor with cinnamon overtones.
- French tarragon thrives in a sunny location with rich, well-drained soil and good air circulation in areas with high humidity. For more details on growing tarragon, see the HSA factsheet on tarragon: <http://herbsociety.org/factsheets/tarragon.pdf>.