

# Did You Know?

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## **Fennel, *Foeniculum vulgare***

- Historically, fennel has been used had a variety of medicinal uses, including use as an appetite suppressant and to relieve stomach issues like indigestion, constipation and gas.
- In ancient China, fennel was considered a snake bite remedy.
- During the Middle Ages, it was hung over doorways to drive away evil spirits.
- Fennel is also associated with the origin of the marathon. Ancient Athenian Pheidippides carried a fennel stalk on his 150 mile, 2 day run to Sparta to gather soldiers for the battle of Marathon with Persia in 490 B.C. The battle itself was also reportedly waged on a field of fennel.
- Fennel seeds are aromatic and sweet, with a flavor similar to anise.
- *Foeniculum vulgare* subsp. *vulgare* var. *azoricum* is the vegetable form of fennel, which forms the bulb.
- The flowers, seeds and leaves of the fennel plant are edible.
- The seeds are baked into breads, biscuits, stuffings, and sausages and added to pickles and sauerkraut. The seeds also compliment asparagus, tomato and cucumber.
- Stems can be grilled with fish, meats, and vegetables, added to salads, olives, fish or used as a garnish.
- Essential oil from the seeds is added to perfumes, soaps, pharmaceuticals and cosmetics.
- Fennel is a larval plant for the swallowtail butterfly.
- Bronze fennel, cultivar '*Rubrum*' is both attractive as a garnish and in perennial and herb gardens.