

Did You Know?



Holy Basil *Ocimum tenuiflorum*

- Additional common names include tulsi, tulasi, and sacred basil.
- In its native India, holy basil is particularly sacred herb in the Hindu tradition where it is thought to be the manifestation of the goddess, Tulasi, and to have grown from her ashes.
- In one version of the legend, Tulasi was tricked into betraying her husband when she was seduced by the god Vishnu in the guise of her husband. In her torment, Tulasi killed herself, and Vishnu declared that she would be “worshipped by women for her faithfulness” and would keep women from becoming widows.
- Holy basil, also referred to as tulsi basil in reference to the goddess Tulasi, became the symbol of love, eternal life, purification and protection.
- Holy basil has also played a role in burial rituals, including scattering the leaves on graves as well as growing the plant on graves.
- There are a few species and varieties referred to as holy basil and all are in the same genus as common garden basil.
- Like other basil, holy basil is a member of the mint family (*Lamiaceae*).
- Historical medicinal uses include treatment of colds and flu due to its antiviral, antibacterial, decongestant and diaphoretic properties. In India, it is used in a tea to clear congestion.
- Other medicinal uses are said to include immune strengthening and balancing, balancing blood sugar, stimulating appetite, soothing digestion and relieving insect stings.