



# 2013 Promising Plant

## ***Mentha aquatica* var. *citrata* – Stewart Smith**

### **FAMILY**

Lamiaceae

### **GENUS**

*Mentha*

### **SPECIFIC EPITHET**

*aquatica*

### **CULTIVAR**

var. *citrata*

### **SYNONYMS**

*Mentha citrata*, *Mentha x piperita*  
nothosubsp. *citrata*, *Mentha*  
*x piperita* var. *citrata*

### **COMMON NAMES**

Bergamot mint, eau-de-cologne  
mint, orange mint, yerba buena

### **LEAVES**

Dark green/bronze purple,  
completely smooth, fragrant

### **FLOWER COLOR**

Lilac

### **BLOOM PERIOD**

Late summer/early fall

### **PLANT TYPE**

Herbaceous perennial

### **PROPAGATION**

Cuttings, root division

### **USES**

Essential oils, culinary,  
medicinal (folklore)

### **HEIGHT/WIDTH**

At least 12" tall

### **LIGHT**

Sun to partial shade, light shade

### **SOIL**

Well-drained loam

### **WATER**

Regular; do not overwater

### **HABIT**

Spreading

### **HARDINESS**

Zones 4-9

### Promising Qualities

- ❖ Sentimental favorite of the North Illinois Unit
- ❖ Highly perfumed aroma
- ❖ Strong growth habit

Bergamot mint, *Mentha aquatica* var. *citrata*, is named after the Italian bergamot, *Citrus bergamia* (A. Tucker). It is not a variety of peppermint. Bergamot mint is naturalized in Australia, Europe, and the United States and is widely cultivated elsewhere. Members of The Herb Society of America, Northern Illinois Unit, have been growing this mint from Stewart Smith since the 1980s. Stewart Smith was a grower from Lake County, Illinois. He had not started out as an herb grower but at the request of his customers had turned his focus to an expanded selection of herbal offerings. The unit especially cherishes his orange mint, then known as *M. xpiperita* v. *citrata*, for its strong, perfumed aroma, hardiness, and strong growth habit. The same strain has been kept alive since the mid-80s by Hilda B. Daly of the Northern Illinois Unit.

### References:

**Photo:** Northern Illinois Unit

The Herb Society of America,  
Northern Illinois Unit  
Tucker, A.O. & T. DeBaggio. 2009.  
The encyclopedia of herbs.  
Portland, OR: Timber Press.

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