

DID YOU KNOW...



MINT

Mentha spp.

- Mint was the symbol of virtue in the Victorian language of flowers.
- Mint has also been associated with lust since it was named after the Greek water nymph Minthe. She was changed into the herb by the jealous wife of Pluto, king of Hades.
- Mint was scattered on temple floors by the ancient Hebrews to provide a refreshing fragrance with as people walked.
- Mint has been used in cooking since ancient Greek and Roman times.
- Mints are featured in dishes still today ranging from sweet to savory and include beverages.
- Folks in the Middle Ages used mint to whiten teeth, cure cold sores, soothe wasp stings and keep milk from curdling. It was also thought to keep mice away from gardens, assuming they don't like the fresh fragrance.
- Mints belong to the Labiatae family which also includes basil, thyme, rosemary, sage, marjoram and oregano. Of the actual *Mentha* spp., there are 19 or so distinct species and many crosses.
- Peppermint (*Mentha x piperita*) and spearmint (*Mentha spicata*) are the two major types of grown commercially. Mint grown in the United States is primarily used to produce essential oil. Only a small amount is produced for tea.
- Other interesting mints include:
 - Pineapple mint – *M. suaveolens* 'Variegata'
 - Orange mint – *M. x piperita* 'Citrata'
 - Chocolate mint – *M. x piperita* 'Chocolate'
 - Corsican mint – *M. requiennii*
 - Pennyroyal – *M. pulegium*

