



2014 Promising Plants

Learn, Explore, Grow

Cunila origanoides (American dittany, stone mint, Maryland mint)

- HSA's Notable Native Herb for 2015
- Found in dry woods from southeast New York to Florida, Texas, Oklahoma, Missouri, and Illinois
- Perennial; 1-2 feet tall; hardy to at least southern Pennsylvania (Zone 6)
- Prefers part shade, moist but well-drained rich acidic soil
- Oregano-scented oval leaves; small violet to white flowers in clusters, July-Oct; hollow stems can form "frost flowers" in winter
- Propagate by divisions or seeds in early spring

Family: Lamiaceae

Uses: Leaf tea is a folk remedy; limited culinary use (not GRAS); dried flowers or wreaths

Available from:

American Native Nursery: <http://americannativenursery.com>

Easy Living Wildflowers: <http://www.easywildflowers.com>

Enchanter's Garden: <http://enchantersgarden.com>

Sources consulted:

Foster and Duke, Eastern/Central Medicinal Plants – Peterson Field Guide;

Tucker and DeBaggio. 2009. The encyclopedia of herbs.



photo credit: Will Cook

Edgeworthia chrysantha (Chinese paperbush, jie xiang, mitsumata)

- *Daphne* relative native to China; naturalized in Japan and Georgia in the U.S.
- Rounded deciduous shrub with cinnamon-colored stems; 6-10 feet tall in ten years
- Hardy in Zones 7-9, with winter protection in Zone 7; generally long-lived and low maintenance
- Blue-green foliage in spring turns yellow in fall
- Winter blooming; very fragrant, creamy yellow flowers color up in November in southern New Jersey; long bloom season
- Needs moist, humus-rich soil and shelter from hot afternoon sun (prefers full shade to partial sun)
- Propagate by cuttings or root divisions

Family: Thymelaeaceae

Uses: ornamental; bark is a source of fiber for high-grade paper

Cultivars: 'Gold Rush', 'Winter Gold', 'Snow Cream', 'Akebono/Red Dragon', 'Nanjing Gold'

Available from:

RareFind Nursery: <http://www.rarefindnursery.com>

Plant Delights Nursery: <http://www.plantdelights.com>

Sources consulted:

Joe and Lorraine Kiefer at Triple Oaks Nursery (Franklinville, NJ); Monrovia.com



photo credit: Joe Kiefer, Triple Oaks Nursery

Lavandula stoechas 'Silver Anouk' PP20.068 (French lavender, Spanish lavender)

- The French lavenders (*L. stoechas*) are native to the Îles d'Hyères off the southern coast of France (the Stoechades). The 'Silver Anouk' cultivar was introduced by Darwin Perennials (www.darwinperennials.com).
- Tender perennial shrub; upright, evergreen; often hardy to Zone 6a (-10°F)
- Leaves are narrow, blue-silver, and stiff; the silver-gray plant is striking overall; dark purple flower spikes are topped with pale purple wings; somewhat fragrant; blooms early spring and reblooms throughout the season
- Grow in full sun to part shade in well-drained soil
- Propagate by cuttings



Family: Lamiaceae

Uses: Mostly ornamental; compact habit; good container plant; good winter resistance to frost

Available from:

DarwinPerennials: www.darwinperennials.com

Sources consulted:

Darwin Perennials: <http://www.darwinperennials.com>

Tucker and DeBaggio. 2009. The encyclopedia of herbs.

Melothria scabra (Mouse melon, Mexican sour cuke, cuca-melon, Guadalupe cucumber, creeping cucumber).

(syns. *M. donnell-smithii*; *M. donnell-smithii* var. *hirtella*; *M. donnell-smithii* var. *rotundifolia*).

- Native to Mexico, southeast, south central, and mid-Atlantic U.S., and portions of South America; named by Charles Victor Naudin in 1866
- Tender perennial vine to 6-12 feet in height; yellow flowers bloom from April through October; abundant 1-2-inch green-white striped fruits, like miniature watermelons
- Prefers medium sun and peat soil
- Propagate from seeds or cuttings



photo credit: Rare Seeds

Family: Cucurbitaceae

Uses: Culinary – stir fry, pickle, or eat raw; Ethnobotanical – the Houma Indians of Louisiana used a poultice of the closely related *M. pendula* to treat snakebites (Native American Ethnobotany); North Carolina considers *M. pendula* to be mildly toxic (purgative); *M. scabra*, though closely related in size and use, is not laxative (Eat the Weeds). The taste of Mexican sour cuke is described as a strongly sweet cucumber flavor with a tangy citrus twist (Territorial Seed Company).

Plants available from:

Morningsun Herb Farm: www.morningsunherbfarm.com

Seeds are available from:

Amazon.com: <http://www.amazon.com>

Territorial Seed Company: www.territorialseed.com

Sources consulted:

Bihrmann's Caudiciforms: <http://www.bihrmann.com>

Eat the Weeds: <http://www.eattheweeds.com>

Folia: <http://myfolia.com>

Native American Ethnobotany:

<http://herb.umd.umich.edu>

Rare Seeds – Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds: <http://www.rareseeds.com>

Micromeria biflora (lemon savory).

(syns. *Satureja biflora*, *Thymus biflorus*, *Clinopodium biflorum*)

M. biflora is distributed globally in South Africa, Arabia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Nepal, Bhutan and Burma at altitudes ranging from 3300-9800 feet in hilly grasslands.

- (8 inches) tender perennial shrub only hardy above zone 11.
- Intense lemon scent and flavor
- Rose to mauve flowers appear in June and July
- Grow in sandy or loamy well-drained soil; not picky about pH or moisture, but won't grow in shade

Family: Lamiaceae

Uses: Essential oil used for flavoring liqueurs; Decoction used for a swollen abdomen, dysentery, colds and coughs; (Flora of China). Flowers and leaves used as a tea; powder of dried flowers and leaves used to flavor lentil soups and curries; paste of the roots used to treat toothache; aroma of rubbed plant inhaled to treat nosebleeds; poultice of plant used to treat wounds; juice of plant is taken internally or inhaled to treat sinusitis (Plants for a Future). Modern research shows it to be anti-inflammatory, analgesic, and antipyretic (reduces fever) (Chandra et al., p. 2544)

Plants available from:

Richters Herbs: <http://www.richters.com>

Morningsun Herb Farm: www.morningsunherbfarm.com

Seeds available from:

The Thyme Garden Herb Co.: <http://www.thymegarden.com>

Sources consulted:

eFloras. Flora of China: www.efloras.org

Plants for a Future: <http://www.pfaf.org>

Chandra, Mahesh, et al. Journal of Medicinal Plants Research.

<http://www.academicjournals.org>



photo credit: Gurcharan Singh

Micromeria douglasii (yerba buena, Oregon tea)

(syns. *Satureja douglasii*, *Clinopodium douglasii*)

- Yerba buena (Spanish for "good herb")
- Flat, creeping perennial native to the Pacific Northwest, British Columbia, and California; ranges as far north as Alaska and as far east as Idaho and Montana
- Hardy in zones 7-10
- Generally found at forest edges and in shaded woods below 3000 ft;
- Growing a foot or less in height with a spread of up to 6 ft, it makes a good, non-aggressive ground cover for moist, shaded areas.
- Rounded leaves with tiny scallops along their margins are velvety, bright green, and have a minty aroma; tiny white flowers bloom between April and September
- Prefers moist soils in part shade
- Propagate from seeds, rooted sections, or cuttings

Family: Lamiaceae

Uses: The leaves make a mild and tasty tea and have been used as a deodorant, to alleviate the pain of childbirth, treat chest colds, purify the blood and occasionally as an aphrodisiac (Moerman, p. 447).

Plants available from:

Richters Herbs: <http://www.richters.com>

Morningsun Herb Farm: www.morningsunherbfarm.com

Seeds available from:

Amazon.com: <http://www.amazon.com>

Sources consulted:

Duke database: <http://www.ars-grin.gov>

Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center: <http://www.wildflower.org>



photo credit: Richters Herbs

Satureja montana* var. *illyrica (purple winter savory) (syn. of *Satureja subspicata* subsp. *subspicata*)

- Prostrate form of winter savory with purple flowers and slightly more refined leaves; drapes nicely over container edges so is ornamental but still tastes good (Carolee Snyder, personal comm.).
- Introduced to the U.S. by Plant Select® in 2007; native to southern Europe
- Perennial, hardy in zones 3b-8b; grows 4-6 inches tall and 12-15 inches wide in average, well-drained soil; drought tolerant once established
- Prefers part sun/part shade; foliage forms trim evergreen mounds; purple-violet flowers appear in summer and cover plant late in the season

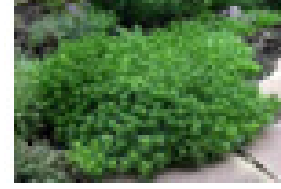


Photo credits: Left: Plant Select® / Right: Plant Lust

Family: Lamiaceae

Uses: Similar in usage to summer savory (*S. hortensis*), winter savory adds an oregano-like taste to vegetable and meat dishes and can be a component of vermouths and bitters (Tucker and DeBaggio, p. 458). Its flavor is harsher than that of summer savory due to its higher thymol content (Bown, p. 349).

Available from:

Mountain Valley Growers: <http://www.mountainvalleygrowers.com>

Morningsun Herb Farm: www.morningsunherbfarm.com

Sources consulted:

Bown, D. 1995. Encyclopedia of herbs & their uses.

Plant Select®: <http://plantselect.org>

Snyder, C.: Carolee's Herb Farm: <http://www.caroleesherbfarm.com>

Tucker, A.O., and T. DeBaggio. 2009. The encyclopedia of herbs.

Ocimum 'Baja' (Baja cinnamon basil)

Baja basil is an extremely sweet variety of cinnamon basil; The Thyme Garden received seeds for it in 1994 from a woman in Baja, Mexico.

- Warm season annual; 18-24 inches tall and 12 inches wide; rich soil; full sun
- Hardy in zones 9 or 10
- Medium sized leaves with a very sweet cinnamon flavor; flowers are white; like most basil, remove flowers to encourage leaf production
- The Herb Society of America chose Baja basil as a promising plant in 2001 and thinks that it once again deserves attention.



photo credit: The Thyme Garden

Family: Lamiaceae

Use: Culinary: Baja basil is delicious in fruit salads, chutneys, and other fruity dishes (The Herb Cottage).

Plants available from:

The Thyme Garden: <http://www.thymegarden.com>

Morningsun Herb Farm: www.morningsunherbfarm.com

Seeds available from:

GardenSeed.com

Sources consulted:

The Herb Cottage: <http://theherbcottage.com>

The Herb Society of America

Available from:

Flora Library: <http://www.floralibrary.com>

Pelargonium ‘Matt’s Mabel’ (‘Matt’s Mabel’ lemon-scented *Pelargonium*, lemon-scented geranium)

- Bill Tufenkian, a well-known *Pelargonium* grower on the west coast, found P. ‘Matt’s Mabel’ as a chance seedling in his greenhouse. Mr. Tufenkian reported that its parent plant was *Pelargonium citronellum*, the species commonly known as P. ‘Mabel Grey’. ‘Matt’s Mabel’ looks very much like its mother plant; however, the leaves are smaller and the flowers are larger. It can grow 2 feet tall and wide. While *P. citronellum* can be difficult to propagate, *P. ‘Matt’s Mabel’* is not. It is a robust plant with a strong upright growth pattern. Best of all, it has the wonderful lemon fragrance of its parent. (Caroline Amidon, pers. comm.).
- Native to South Africa, scented *Pelargoniums* are perennials which do not reliably survive freezing temperatures. In colder regions they can be grown outdoors as annuals or in containers brought indoors during the winter.
- Repot container-grown plants every year or two in a well-draining potting mix; keep evenly moist but not soggy
- Grow outdoors in a bright spot; shield from direct sunlight in hot climates
- Propagate from cuttings
- Prune and shape established plants in late winter or early spring



photo credit: ewkennel

Family: Geraniaceae

Use: ornamental; fragrance

Plants available from:

Goodwin Creek Gardens: www.goodwincreekgardens.com

Sources consulted:

Caroline Amidon: scented.pels@gmail.com

Goodwin Creek Gardens: www.goodwincreekgardens.com

Rosmarinus officinalis ‘Haifa’ (‘Haifa’ trailing rosemary)

- Low growing, essentially prostrate form
- Slow growing, reaching a width of 18 inches and a height of only 6 inches
- Needle-like foliage; flowers are light blue; evergreen perennial hardy to zone 8
- Excellent drought tolerant groundcover; prefers full sun in light well-drained soil; excellent container plant
- Henry Flowers (pers. comm.) has been very happy with this small prostrate variety in the gardens at Festival Hill (Texas). Henry says it is probably the most manageable prostrate rosemary for a container or small area. Most prostrate varieties tend to get very large in Texas - some over 8 feet in diameter - but not ‘Haifa’.
- Repot container plants periodically; prune out dead wood in the spring



photo credit: Morningsun Herb Farm

Family: Lamiaceae

Uses: culinary, craft, groundcover

Plants available from:

Morningsun Herb Farm: <http://www.morningsunherbfarm.com>

Sources consulted:

Flowers, H. 2014.

Morning Sun Herb Farm: <http://www.morningsunherbfarm.com>

Tucker, A.O., and T. DeBaggio. 2009. The encyclopedia of herbs.

[Note: We have listed three species of savory (*M. biflora*, *M. douglasii*, and *S. montana* var. *illyrica*).

Savory will be IHA's Herb of the Year for 2015.]

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