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African Blue Basil

Ocimum 'African Blue'



African Blue Basil flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Plant Height: 18 inches

Flower Height: 24 inches

Spread: 18 inches

Sunlight: ○

Hardiness Zone: (annual)

Edible Qualities

African Blue Basil is an annual herb that is commonly grown for its edible qualities, although it does have ornamental merits as well. The fragrant oval bluish-green leaves with distinctive purple veins which emerge deep purple in spring are usually harvested from early summer to early fall. The leaves have a pleasant taste.

The leaves are most often used in the following ways:

- Fresh Eating
- Cooking
- Seasoning

Planting & Growing

African Blue Basil will grow to be about 18 inches tall at maturity extending to 24 inches tall with the flowers, with a spread of 18 inches. Although it's not a true annual, this fast-growing plant can be expected to behave as an annual in our climate if left outdoors over the winter, usually needing replacement the following year. As such, gardeners should take into consideration that it will perform differently than it would in its native habitat.

This plant is quite ornamental as well as edible, and is as much at home in a landscape or flower garden as it is in a designated herb garden. It should only be grown in full sunlight. It prefers to grow in average to moist conditions, and shouldn't be allowed to dry out. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This particular variety is an interspecific hybrid. It can be propagated by cuttings; however, as a cultivated variety, be aware that it may be subject to certain restrictions or prohibitions on propagation.

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African Blue Basil is a good choice for the edible garden, but it is also well-suited for use in outdoor pots and containers. With its upright habit of growth, it is best suited for use as a 'thriller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination; plant it near the center of the pot, surrounded by smaller plants and those that spill over the edges. Note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.