

ANOTHER
HERB HERBERT FAVOURITE HERBS
FACT SHEET

African Basil

Ocimum kilimandscharicum × *basilicum* 'Dark Opal'

Basils are rich in volatile oils, which often vary considerably within the same species and according to growing conditions.

The composition of oils in a particular plant affects its aroma, flavor and uses, and may make identification difficult.

Ocimum sp. is a much-branched, highly aromatic perennial plant with ovate, light green leaves. Whorls of small tubular flowers are borne in terminal racemes from summer to mid autumn.

The name *Ocimum* is from the Greek *okimon*, used by Theophrastus for basil.

PARTS USED

Whole plant, leaves, seeds, oil

PROPERTIES

A restorative warming, aromatic herb that relaxes spasms, lowers fever, improves digestion and is effective against bacterial infections and intestinal parasites.

USES OF THE HERB

Culinary

Leaves are used with tomatoes and tomato-flavoured dishes, pasta sauces, vegetables especially beans, peppers, and eggplant, soups and stuffing for duck.

Aromatic

Oil is used in perfumery and aromatherapy.

Medicinal

Internally for feverish illnesses especially colds and influenza, poor digestion, nausea, abdominal cramps. Externally for acne, loss of smell, insect stings and skin infections.

GROWTH

Ornamental. Rich, light, well-drained to dry soil in sun.

Propagate by cuttings in spring to autumn (minimum 13 degree C.), Slugs, aphids, white fly, spider mites and Botrytis may attack plants.

HARVEST

Whole plants are cut as flowering begins and distilled for oil. Leaves are picked during the growing season and used fresh or juiced, or dried for infusions.



Any enquiries can be directed to:
HERB HERBERT P/L
PO Box 24 Monbulk
Victoria 3793 AUSTRALIA
E-mail: herb@herbherbert.com



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