

ANOTHER  
**HERB HERBERT FAVOURITE HERBS**  
FACT SHEET

# Borage

*Borage officinalis*

**T**here are 3 species of annuals, biennials and perennials in this genus.

Originally native of Mediterranean countries. There are conflicting views as to the origin of this plants Latin Botanic name. Many tales on the history of Borage have been written, from adding to wines or other soothing drinks to make you glad and merry, driving away all sadness and melancholy, to bringing courage to men in battle during days of old.

In the early 19th century the young tops and flowers were used as a pot herb, in salads and in wine, cider and claret for its unusual property to cool the drink.

## DESCRIPTION

Annual, sometimes biennial, self seeding. The whole plant is rough with white prickly hairs. The stems are branched, hollow and succulent. The leaves are large, oval and pointed, deep green colour. The striking, brilliant blue flowers are star like and face downward, while the colour is set off by its prominent black anthers in the centre. Sometimes white or pink flowers emerge.

## PARTS USED

Leaves, flowers

## PROPERTIES

A soothing herb rich in potassium and calcium and other mineral acids.

## USES OF THE HERB

### Culinary

Young leaves and flowers are added to salads and sandwich's Add flowers to wines and punches to give a cucumber like flavour, dip in batter and deep fry and use as a vegetable in soups and stews (chopped fine like parsley). Flowers frozen in ice can be used for cool drinks.

### Medicinal

A poultice of the leaves is said to reduce swelling and bruises. French Herbalists use Borage for colds, fevers and lung complaints such as bronchitis and pneumonia. Also attributed to restoring vitality during illness.

### Decorative

The flowers dry well and may be used to add to potpourri.

### Companion Planting

Borage attracts bees which help to pollinate other plants. Beneficial for planting near strawberries

## CULTIVATION

Borage thrives in most soils even though they do prefer rich, moist soil. Full sun to light shade, requiring sun to flower. Any organic matter dug into the soil will enrich it for better results.

Self seeded plants require thinning the following season and transplanting should be done when plants are small, as once established they form tap roots and do not like being moved.

## HARVEST

Pick leaves in spring and summer as it begins to flower and used fresh or dried. Pick flowers when open.



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Height .5-1m (1-3ft) x  
Spread 15-30cm(6-12in)

