

Catnip_1994.txt

CATNIP =====

CULTIVATION: ===== Catnip is a strong smelling, gray-green perennial with heart shaped, gently toothed leaves. Grows to 3 feet in height. Flowers are white, dotted with purple.

Catnip needs a sunny or light shady location. The soil should be well drained. Sow or divide whole plant in spring. Germination time is about 8 days, and plant matures in 50 days. Grows in zone 3-10. Thin and transplant to 12 inches apart, and cut back in autumn. The scent released by any bruised leafs or root will attract cats, who then molest the plant.

Harvest the leaves and flower tops in late summer when plants are in bloom. Dry leaves and store in opaque, tightly sealed container to preserve the volatile oil.

CULINARY USES: ===== Catnip possesses a disagreeable mint like aroma. Rub leaves on meat to flavor. Moderate amount of fresh catnip leaves can be added to salads, to give it a minty like flavor.

GRAPEFRUIT AND CATMINT DESSERT : Skin off 2 medium grapefruit rind thinly, taking care to avoid the white pith. Put into blender. Remove pith and discard. Coarsely chop the grapefruit flesh and add to blender with 4 ounces of caster sugar, 1 teaspoon of chopped fresh catmint, and 1 1/2 pint of cold water. Blend until the mixture is light green. Strain into stemmed glasses and refrigerate until well chilled. Garnish with a red currant leaf or a sprig of catmint.

MEDICAL USES: ===== Catnip has a considerable reputation as a sedative drink, especially when the dried, minty-flavored leaves and flowering tops are brewed into a hot tea and taken at bedtime. It also soothe the digestive tract or suppresses menstrual cramps. Infusion can also relieve colds and fever. Catnip induces sleep and perspiration, but

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does not increase body temperature. Do not boil catnip, boiling dissipates its healing oil.

CATNIP TEA : Stir about 2 teaspoons into a pot of hot water, you can also add some lemon balm for flavor. Let it steep for 10-20 in minutes. Because of the volatile nature of catnip, a simple and quick infusion should be made. The parts used is the flowering tops gathered in August.

Externally it may be applied to cuts, abrasions and bruises. Some research shows that catnip has antibiotic properties.

WARNING: ===== Generally regarded as safe, for healthy nonpregnant, nonnursing adults.

OTHER USES: ===== Plant catnip near vegetables to deter flea beetles. Use catnip tea compression on the forehead to release pressure from the eye, and to overcome the pain of bee stings. Catnip will attract bees to your garden. Cat lovers can use this herb to make a toy for their pet.