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Fennel

Foeniculum vulgare

Plant Height: 3 feet

Flower Height: 5 feet

Spread: 3 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 4a

Other Names: Common Fennel

Description:

An outstanding herb grown for its airy, finely cut, fragrant foliage; showy yellow flowers in summer mass atop the plant; anise flavored foliage and seeds are used in cooking; a standout in the border with its smoky look, and is also great when massed

Edible Qualities

Fennel is a perennial herb that is commonly grown for its edible qualities, although it does have ornamental merits as well. The entire above-ground parts of the plant are edible, and are usually harvested from late summer to early fall. The edible parts have a savory taste.

The plant is most often used in the following ways:

- Cooking
- Seasoning

Features & Attributes

Fennel has masses of beautiful yellow flat-top flowers held atop the stems in mid summer, which are most effective when planted in groupings. The flowers are excellent for cutting. Its attractive fragrant ferny leaves remain bluish-green in color with showy violet variegation throughout the season.



Fennel
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Fennel in bloom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

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This is an herbaceous perennial herb with tall flower stalks held atop a low mound of foliage. It brings an extremely fine and delicate texture to the garden composition and should be used to full effect. This plant will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and is best cleaned up in early spring before it resumes active growth for the season. It is a good choice for attracting butterflies to your yard. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Insects
- Self-Seeding

Aside from its primary use as an edible, Fennel is sutiable for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use
- Herb Gardens

Planting & Growing

Fennel will grow to be about 3 feet tall at maturity extending to 5 feet tall with the flowers, with a spread of 3 feet. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 4 years. As an herbaceous perennial, this plant will usually die back to the crown each winter, and will regrow from the base each spring. Be careful not to disturb the crown in late winter when it may not be readily seen!

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 does best in full sun to partial shade. It does best in average to evenly moist conditions, but will not tolerate standing water. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is not originally from North America.