

## Bronze Fennel

*Foeniculum vulgare 'Purpureum'*



<b>Height:</b>	1.2 - 1.5m (4 - 5ft)
<b>Suitable for:</b>	A warm sunny position, rich well drained soil.
<b>Summary:</b>	The bronze feathery leaves on this tall elegant perennial herb contrast well with the bright yellow flower heads.

### More information:

Bronze fennel is slightly hardier than the green variety and makes a striking contrast when planted with green foliage plants at the back of a border. The whole plant is sweetly scented with an aromatic, aniseed fragrance and flavour. It flourishes in warm sunny positions but will not tolerate cold, damp soils.

For a constant supply of leaves for the kitchen the flowering stems should be removed, however for ornamental purposes these are one of its most attractive features.

Fennel is used a great deal in French and Italian cuisine. The tender leaves are used most especially with fish and salads and also finely chopped in sauces. The strongest flavour is in the seeds which dry well for winter use.

Fennel leaves add a certain tang to stuffings but need to be used with other strong flavoured herbs otherwise they will dominate.

### Fennel Rice stuffing for fish, chicken or courgettes

This stuffing can be used to fill 4 fish prior to grilling, a large roasting chicken or courgette halves with the seeds hollowed out, stuffed and baked in the oven until tender.

- 1 large onion
- 50 g butter
- 2 tbs chopped [fennel](#) leaves
- 1 tbs chopped [lovage](#) leaves
- 125 g brown rice - cooked until just tender
- 1 large egg - beaten
- salt and freshly ground black pepper

Melt the butter in a small pan over a gentle heat and soften the finely chopped onion for about 10 minutes but do not allow to brown. Stir in the rest of the ingredients and mix gently, season to taste.

Fennel plants can be grown in the kitchen garden as companion plants. They attract beneficial insects, such as hoverflies, which attack garden pests. The flower stems make a long lasting cut flower for the house. However it should never be planted too close to beans, tomatoes or kohlrabi as it is said to badly affect their growth.