

Purple Sage

Salvia officinalis 'purpurascens'



Height: 30 -60cm (1-2ft)

Suitable for: A sunny spot in light dry soil.

Summary: Purple sage is a popular plant in all areas of the garden. Currently it is used increasingly in garden design and landscaping as its deep rich colour blends so well with a huge range of garden plants, most especially the silvery ones.

More information:

Purple sage is a striking plant with deep purple leaves and a velvety texture. Like the golden variety it has a more compact habit and is useful planted in smaller areas where common sage will grow too big.

It looks particularly attractive when planted with silver leaved plants such as cotton lavender, artemesias and lavenders, and also those with pinky hued flowers for example Thyme 'Silver Posie' and common chives. A measure of its popularity in garden design can be seen by its increasing use in gardens for instance at the Chelsea Flower Show.

Its culinary uses are exactly the same as for the common sage. Sage is best known for its use in stuffings to accompany pork and poultry. It is also found in a variety of other savoury dishes such as sausages and sage derby cheese.

It has a particularly strong flavour and should be used with caution as its powerful flavour can be bitter if used to excess.

As well as these favourite uses for sage, it can be used in many other more unusual ways.

- Sage leaves, fried until crispy in a little hot oil, make a lovely tasty garnish.
- 2 tsp of finely chopped sage leaves and a couple of tablespoonfuls of grated cheese transform a plain omelette.
- Chopped sage leaves can be sautéed with leeks in a little butter or oil for a special vegetable dish.
- 8 chopped sage leaves mixed with 2 tbs grainy mustard, 100ml apple juice or cider and a pinch of salt makes an excellent marinade for pork steaks.

Herbalists regard purple sage as more potent than common sage, and will use it in preference to the green.