

## Thyme Caborn Wine and Roses

### *Thymus 'Caborn Wine and Roses'*



<b>Height:</b>	5 x 40 cm
<b>Suitable for:</b>	Sunny well drained soil; paths, gravel and rock gardens, pots and containers.
<b>Summary:</b>	A compact and spreading thyme with a prostrate habit. The dark green, aromatic leaves are oval and have a great flavour, making it ideal to plant for both culinary and ornamental uses. In early summer it is a carpet of small rosy pink flowers. It makes a colourful edging herb and grows well in gravel, paths and containers.

#### More information:

According to some sources Thyme Caborn Wine and Roses is a cultivar of *Thymus ciliatus*, which is a native of North west Africa. This thyme is a new and recent cultivar bred in the UK and only available for sale since 2007. It is very prostrate, only growing to a maximum of 5 cm high.

The perennial dark green foliage makes it an ornamental plant for all seasons and the covering of rosy pink flowers will attract plenty of bees and butterflies to your garden in summer.

Like all thymes it prefers poorish dry conditions and warm sun - any situation which is not soggy or shaded. The lighter and more gravelly the soil the better, thymes grown in heavier soils tend to be less aromatic and have a poorer display of flowers.

Once established it will spread to 40cm across and is maintenance free apart from an annual trim after the flowers have finished.

All creeping thymes look good planted between bricks and paving stones.

Dig out a hole twice as big as the rootball and mix the excavated soil with compost and coarse sand. Use this to partly refill the hole before planting your thyme, taking care not to plant more deeply than it was in its original pot. Water in to settle the soil, don't be tempted to firm the soil down by hand, and mulch with gravel or other small stones.

As the leaves on Caborn Wine and Roses are slightly larger than most creeping thymes it makes a good culinary herb and can be used as you would any other thyme, in soups and stews, salad dressings and vinegars, to name but a few uses.

Thyme has always been one of the most popular herbs in the kitchen and the old saying '*If in doubt use thyme*' is in most cases undoubtedly true. It compliments the flavours of many other herbs and works particularly well combined with oregano and marjoram. Wine or cider vinegar infused with sprigs of thyme and oregano and then combined with olive oil makes a flavourful dressing for salads.

Whilst we mostly think of thyme a 'savoury' herb it has an affinity with dairy products such as cheese and cream sauces. In combination with lemon it makes a delicious crème brûlée with subtle and intriguing flavours.

## Thyme and Lemon Crème Brûlée

Makes 4 ramekins.

- 350 ml double cream
- 120 ml milk - full fat is best if not substitute semi-skimmed
- zest of a large lemon
- 6 long sprigs of thyme
- 4 egg yolks
- 60 g sugar
- brown granulated sugar for the caramelisation of the tops.

Chop the lemon zest and add it to a pan with the thyme sprigs, cream and milk. Bring just to the boil and then remove from the heat and leave for the flavours to infuse for 30 minutes. After the flavours have been extracted strain through a sieve to remove the zest and thyme sprigs, return to the pan and reheat

to hot but not boiling.

Fill a roasting tin which will hold your 4 ramekins with 1cm boiling water, place in the oven and preheat to 325F, Gas Mark 3, 160C (140C fan).

In a large bowl whisk together the egg yolks and the 60g sugar and add a little of the lemon zest and thyme leaves from the strainer. Beating constantly, add the cream mixture to the egg yolks a little at a time until it is all incorporated. Divide the mixture between 4 ramekin dishes, make sure that you fill each dish well as the filling tends to shrink after cooking. Place in the pan of hot water in the oven. The water should reach no more than half way up the sides of the ramekins.

Bake for 25 minutes or until the edges are set and the centres are just a little wobbly. The time may vary according to your oven - oven temperatures being notoriously unreliable! Turn off the oven and leave the brûlées inside for a further 10 minutes before removing and leaving to cool. Refrigerate until required.

When you are ready to serve, sprinkle each ramekin with the brown sugar - about 1 tsp each or more to taste. If you have a special cook's blowtorch then you are well away, but for the rest of us... Preheat the grill to as hot as possible. Heat the ramekins for a few minutes until the sugar is melted and caramelised, taking care that they do not burn.

Serve immediately decorated with a sprig of thyme.