

Village Garden Center

& Landscape Service

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Cherokee Purple Tomato

By Eva Soud

The Cherokee purple tomato is a cultivar heirloom plant variety noted for its great tomato flavor, just the right amount of sweetness, and unique dusky red/deep purple color. This tomato was one of the first known dark colored tomato groups. The eye pleasing and mouth watering Cherokee purple is beefsteak shaped with green shoulders and its unusual outside coloring carries through to the delectable flesh inside. The indeterminate vine plant grows to a height of nine feet to support the heavy weight one pounder fruit. In 80 days to harvest, you can be taking a huge bite out of its juicy, dense texture. An indeterminate tomato plant grows and produces blossoms and fruits until killed by external factors such as frost. Indeterminate plants produce fruit during the entire growing season, whereas determinate tomatoes are most productive in a larger, single harvest.

As the story goes, the Cherokee purple tomato was given to early settlers of the United States from the Native American Cherokees. You will be tickled pink to find on examining the fruit that it has a purple

hue. Seeds from the heirloom Cherokee purple were sent by collectors to two major seed companies and each company elected to carry the cultivar, which makes them widely available to the home gardener today. Tomatoes are appealing with amateur and professional breeders alike because the vegetables are easy to save seeds from and the plants are easily grown.

Start seeds indoors 4-6 wks before last frost date.

Superior for canning or fresh. This is a vigorous, disease - resistant tomato.



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Village Garden

Center

Imagine the possibilities!

Aromatherapy: using your garden

Whether burying your nose in a fragrant English rose or enjoying the scent of fresh basil while cooking, aromatic plants are one of life's simple pleasures.

What's more, research has shown that plant aromas can have a positive effect on our mood and sense of wellbeing.

Aromatherapy harnesses these beneficial effects by using a range of plant-based essential oils.

Most oils are extracted by distillation, passing steam through the flowers, leaves or roots of aromatic plants and collecting the fragrant oils that are released.

But the good news is that you can enjoy the therapeutic power of plants simply by growing some aromatic herbs yourself.

Many of the plants used to create aromatherapy oils can be grown easily in your garden, in containers or even in pots on a window sill, so you can enjoy them all year round.

When planning a herb garden, choose herbs you love the smell of and ones that you'll use. 'Plant them where you're going to smell them – an uplifting scent right by the front door, pots of your favourite culinary herbs in the kitchen, or bunches of freshly picked mint hung up in the bathroom.'

Here are six aromatic herbs that are easy to grow to help you get started.

You can start from seeds or purchase plants.

Lavender (*lavandula angustifolia*)

Pale silver-green spikes with purple-blue flowers in summer, lavender is

best known for its calming properties. Scientists in Portugal have found that the essential oil from local lavender is also a potent antifungal, killing the fungi that cause athlete's foot and ringworm.

Try rubbing the fresh flowers directly onto your temples and forehead, avoiding the eyes, to help soothe a headache, or before bedtime for a good night's sleep. Alternatively, the dried flowers can be popped in a herb sachet and placed under your pillow.



"The Earth laughs In Flowers"

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You can also add the leaves and flowers sparingly to soups, stews and salads.

Gardening tip: 'Most lavender varieties are hardy enough to survive a winter frost in the garden but grow well in large containers too'.



Mint (*mentha spicata*)



Textured, spearmint-scented leaves with purple flowers from summer to autumn, mint has an uplifting, energising scent, and is a good herb for the kitchen.

For mint tea though, a peppermint plant is best and aids digestion. Stuff a small handful of fresh leaves into a cup or mug. Pour on freshly boiled water and leave to steep for five minutes. Add a little brown sugar or honey to taste.

Gardening tip: mint can be invasive in gardens but is an excellent container herb and thrives in semi-shade.

Leaves are best picked before the plant flowers.

Chamomile (*chamaemelum nobile*)

Sweet-smelling foliage with white, daisy-like flowers in summer, chamomile's highly scented flower heads are a powerful antiseptic and have anti-inflammatory properties.



Chamomile, one of our best-loved old garden herbs, is renowned for its sedative properties, You can make a soothing oil for skin

rashes by packing dried chamomile flowers tightly into a sterilised jar then cover in olive oil. Seal and leave in the sun for three weeks. 'For a 'sleepy tea', steep a teaspoon of delicate flowers, fresh or dried, in a cup of hot water with a little honey.' For a brightening rinse for fair hair, pour a jug of boiling water over a handful of dried flowers and steep for half an hour. Strain and pour over the hair several times.'

Gardening tip: 'Chamomile grows best in a window box or garden rather than indoors,'

'Water well in summer and pick flowers when fully open.'

Rosemary (*rosmarinus officinalis*)

With highly aromatic, needle-shaped leaves and pale blue flowers in summer, research has shown its scent can improve focus and memory.

Rosemary is one of the most versatile herbs in the kitchen, home and medicinally.

'A few sprigs thrown on the fire will make the whole house smell incredible, or you can boil a handful in half a litre of water for 10 minutes to add to your bath water.' Rosemary can be good for the digestive tract and for reducing flatulence.

Try steeping a teaspoon of the needles in hot water and drink as an occasional, potent detoxifying tea.

Gardening tip: 'Rosemary likes a well-drained soil. It can survive a frost but isn't good in wet weather.

'Grow in containers that you can move out of the rain come winter, and don't overwater in the colder months.'



Basil (*ocimum basilicum*)



Basil oil is often used in aromatherapy for improving concentration, depression and easing migraine.

Basil's deliciously aromatic leaves aren't only for tomato sauces. Basil leaves, used fresh with cold food, aid digestion and the juice of basil leaves rubbed onto skin repels mosquitoes.

The essential oil is often used in aromatherapy for improving concentration, depression and easing migraine.

Try to pick basil leaves when young and always from the top to encourage new growth. Once picked, you can pop them in the freezer for a fresh supply during the winter.

Gardening tip: Basil is prone to root rot so don't water your basil plants after midday or the roots can be left damp throughout the night. 'Basil grows well in large containers on sunny patios or in pots on a window sill

and is best brought inside during winter.'

Thyme (*thymus vulgaris*)

Sweet or common thyme has long been considered a medicinal plant. A natural antiseptic, gargling a warm water and thyme infusion helps sore throats and infected gums. Add fresh sprigs to flavour stews or roasted vegetables.

Gardening tip: 'These drought-loving plants will need shelter from wet weather during the winter and not much watering. 'A low-nutrient soil will improve the leaves' aroma and flavour.'



From the Garden of Eva

Buffalo Chicken Dip

1 rotisserie chicken (about 4 cups cooked chicken)

1 12-ounce bottle Louisiana Hot Sauce

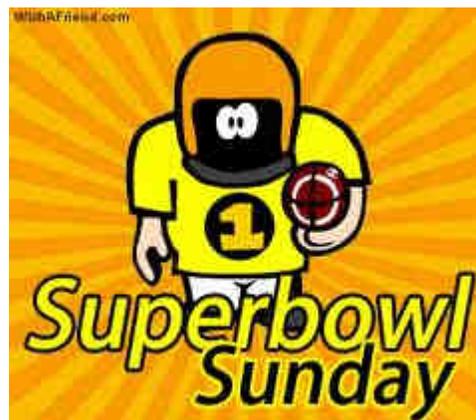
1 bunch green onions, finely chopped

1 8-ounce package cream cheese

1 cup good quality blue cheese salad dressing (such as Naturally Fresh or Marie's)

1 cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Debone chicken; shred meat. Discard skin and bones. Place shredded chicken in a lightly greased 13x9x2-inch baking dish. Add hot sauce and green onions to chicken; stir until chicken is fully coated with sauce. Place cream cheese and blue cheese dressing in a small saucepan over medium heat. Cook until cream cheese is melted, stirring constantly. Pour cream cheese mixture over chicken. Bake, uncovered, for 20 minutes. Sprinkle cheddar cheese on top and continue baking until cheese is melted, about 5 minutes. Allow dip to rest for 10 minutes before serving. Serve with chips, crackers and/or celery sticks. Makes about 4 cups.



Andi's



This is the best time to take inventory of your canned goods. This will be helpful to plan your seed needs.

Shop early for seeds, the early shopper gets the best choice of seeds!

Start your onions from seed now. They will be ready to set out in April. Onions from seed are firmer and last much longer than from sets.

Wash and sterilize seed-starting containers in 1-part bleach to 9-parts water.

If you want to give your vegetables an early start, now is the best time to start seeds in a greenhouse, cold frame or hot bed.

Start herbs in containers from seed. Fresh parsley, basil, thyme, and lavender grow great in containers And are wonderful to cook with!

“Happy Planting!”

Andi



It's a bug eat

Bug world

Using herbs to attract beneficial insects, or beneficial planting, is a great way to bring in the bugs that you want to the garden. Beneficial insects not only prey on the damaging insects that eat your crops, they also pollinate the garden. This is an essential step in producing the most vegetables possible without using chemical enhancements.

How Does Beneficial Planting Work?

Beneficial planting with herbs does take a little bit of planning. It is important to plant your herbs to provide blossoms from as early in the season as possible, to as late in the fall as your garden grows. This provides food and safe shelter for every type of beneficial insect to want to stay in your garden area.

What Types Of Insects Am I Attracting?

Beneficial insects that will be attracted to your herbs will be numerous. They include insects such as parasitic wasps, that inject their eggs into the host insect, hornets that are excellent predators who carry off flies and other larvae and beetles. Beetles from lady bugs, who eat aphids and spider mites, to ground beetles that prey on many pests that come out at night like cutworms and slug eggs, tent caterpillars and army worms. Dragonflies, lacewings and spiders are also beneficial to the garden. Although may be not a family favorite, spiders are excellent predators and are usually shy enough that you do not even see where they live.

What Herbs Attract Beneficial Insects?

Herbs that attract beneficial insects will have large clusters of flowers that are tiny. These include fennel, dill, anise, coriander, yarrow and calendula. For early blossoms, plant calendula. This will allow the insects that prey on early pests like aphids to set up house. Planting the herbs in the carrot family: Fennel, dill, anise, will allow the mid season blossoms to grow. The late season bloomers like yarrow will round out the garden season, allowing for the longest available food and housing for the insects you want to remain in your garden.





At the Garden Center

Bamboo gardening gloves
Cool & comfortable
Great grip wet or dry

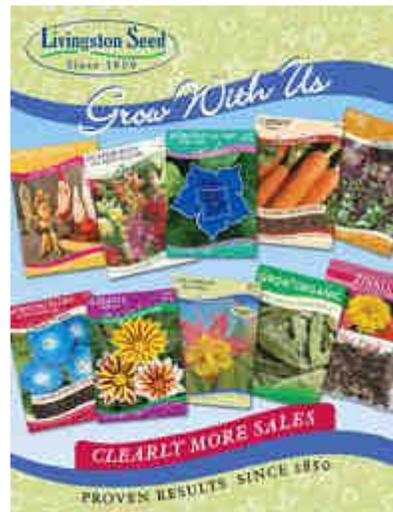
Bird baths

All new



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Heirloom vegetable,
Herbs, Flower seeds



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