



Willow Moon Herbals



Thyme

Latin binomial: *Thymus vulgaris*, L.

Description: Thyme is a perennial mint-family plant that is aromatic and low-growing, often forming dense mats. The leaves are small, only about 1/8 inch long and 1/16 inch broad, narrow and elliptical, greenish-grey in color. Thyme has an agreeable aromatic smell and a warm pungent taste. The fragrance of its leaves is due to an essential oil, which gives it its flavoring value for culinary purposes, and is also the source of its medicinal properties. It is in flower from May to August.

History: Ancient Egyptians used thyme in embalming. The ancient Greeks used it in their baths and burnt it as incense in their temples, believing that thyme was a source of courage. It was thought that the spread of thyme throughout Europe was thanks to the Romans, as they used it to purify their rooms and to "give an aromatic flavor to cheese" and liqueurs.

Uses: Thyme is used most widely in cooking and provides lots of iron. Thyme is a basic ingredient in French, Greek, Italian, Lebanese, Persian, Spanish, Syrian, Turkish, Arab and Caribbean cuisines. The essential oil of Thyme is made up of 20-55% thymol, which has antiseptic properties and is the main active ingredient in Listerine mouthwash. Before the advent of modern antibiotics, it was used to medicate bandages. It has also been shown to be effective against the fungus that commonly infects toenails. A tea made by infusing the herb in water can be used for cough and bronchitis. Medicinally, Thyme is used for respiratory infections in the form of a tincture, tisane, salve, syrup or by steam inhalation. Consider a strong cup of antiseptic Thyme tea to help eliminate coughs, mucus congestion, or sore throat from cold or flu, and is beneficial for bronchitis or pneumonia.

Dosage: Make an infusion with 1 teaspoon of the dried herb or 1 tablespoon of the chopped fresh herb for every cup of water, steeped for 15 or 20 minutes.

Sources: The Green Pharmacy, Herbal Remedies for Dummies, A Modern Herbal,

Note: Any remedies listed on this web site are from historical references and used for teaching purposes only. The contents are not meant to diagnose, treat, prescribe, or substitute consultation with a licensed health-care professional.

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