



Bulletin no. 8 July 2020

## Sage, *Salvia officinalis* L.



There are many varieties of sage, we have planted three types in the garden : purple sage, yellow and green variegated lemon sage, and green officinal sage.

### Botanical description

Sage is treated as an annual in some areas but can survive and grow back in the spring. It can become a woody underbrush. Its leaves are oblong and end with a pointed tip. They have a silvery, woolly appearance. The flowers do not appear until the second year and are grouped in small purplish or bluish terminal clusters. Sage has a strongly aromatic, lively, pungent and pleasant smell. Its taste is bitter, warm, camphorated and astringent.



### How to cultivate

Sage likes well-drained soil. It grows in full sun in dry, arid limestone soil. It is introduced to the garden when the risk of frost is removed. It is a good idea to mulch the plants in autumn to protect them from the rigours of winter. It is spread through seeding, cutting or layering. It has a repellent effect on several pests. It keeps flies away from cabbage and carrots. It goes well with cabbage family vegetables, carrots, strawberries, tomatoes, and herbs such as basil, rosemary and marjoram.



### What parts to use

The leaves are used in cooking and the flowering tops are used for medicinal purposes.

### Cosmetic uses.

Sage is astringent (it tightens the pores of the skin) and antiseptic. It is suitable for oily skin and may help fight acne. It improves the elasticity of dry skin. An infusion of sage can be used to rinse the hair. It is excellent for toning the scalp, which could reduce hair loss and stimulate hair regrowth. The sage infusion could regulate the secretion of sebum thus reducing oily hair. Sage also gives highlights to dark hair.

## Domestic uses

Scientists are said to have observed that when sage is burned, it releases negative ions that cancel out positive ions generated by pollution, electrical appliances, lack of air circulation etc. A high concentration of positive ions is considered harmful to health.

## Culinary uses

The aromatic taste of sage is very pronounced, thus it should be used in small quantities. Sage stimulates the appetite and helps in the digestion of fats, which makes it interesting in richer dishes such as meat dishes. It is often used in marinades for meats such as pork and veal. Sage is one of the ingredients in the famous *Herbes de Provence*.

## RECIPES

### *Herbes de Provence.*



- 2 parts marjoram
- 2 parts oregano
- 2 parts savoury
- 2 parts of sage
- 2 parts thyme
- 1 part hyssop
- 1 part rosemary

Mix all these herbs together and use to flavour dishes to taste.

### Sage butter

- 60 ml fresh sage, chopped
- 250 ml unsalted butter

Mix well and refrigerate for the butter to take all its flavour. This butter enhances the flavour of bread, baked potatoes, vegetables and fish.



## Medicinal uses

Sage acts to reduce excess secretions from the body: it reduces perspiration, dries mucus in the respiratory tract and excess saliva. It also acts on the digestive system and the female reproductive system. It also treats several skin problems. And finally it is a nervous and general tonic.

### Herbal tea for a sleep without sweat

- |                          |                                                                                                                        |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| - A pinch of sage        | Pour hot water over the plants and let infuse for 5 to 10 minutes. Drink lukewarm, especially in case of night sweats. |
| - A pinch of lavender    |                                                                                                                        |
| - A cup of boiling water | This herbal tea soothes night sweats and prepares for sleep. But you can enjoy its good taste at any time.             |

## The legend and popularity of sage

Sage has great importance in Native American cultures. In many ceremonies sage was used as a purifying incense, to prepare people for rituals or before receive teachings.

The Massacre of the Innocents is an episode from the Gospel that tells that King Herod is said to have ordered the murder of all children less than two years of age in and around Bethlehem. He feared the coming of a king of the Jews announced by his soothsayers. A Provençal legend tells that Mary would have begged the Rose and then the Gillyflower to protect her son with their petals. Faced with their refusal, the Sage blossomed and covered the ground with its velveteaves, hiding the mother and child. Since that time the rose has thorns, the gillyflower has malodorous flowers but the sage has appreciated medicinal virtues.

*The information contained in these sheets are partly taken and adapted from the Herb Art notebooks published by the Herbothèque [herbotheque.com](http://herbotheque.com)*

