

# Basil

Ocimum basilicum

A hardy, low maintenance, and essential herb, basil is a fantastic partner to any tomato plant. It's an annual plant that does well in many climates.

Basil can be sown from spring to mid-summer and germinates best in warm conditions. Harvesting leaves more often means more leaves will grow and the plant will flourish. While it sounds counter intuitive, the more you harvest basil the more the plant will grow. From where you harvest, 2 new stems will grow.

Once the plant starts to flower, it's best to remove the flower stem as soon as you can as the leaves will start to lose their flavour. One plant will provide you with an abundance of leaves.

Recommendations:

To easily identify your seedlings, label your stake.

Basil goes very well with tomato, and makes delicious pesto.

Freeze left over pesto to minimise wastage.

To increase bushiness of the plant, prune the tip and any flower spikes. Harvest often to encourage growth.

Plant your seedling in a place with great drainage.

To save your seed:

Allow the plant to flower. The leaves will lose their flavour – this is to be expected. As the flowers dry they'll change colour from green to brown. A brown stem is a cue to harvest your seeds. Remove the seeds from the dried flower head, and be sure to let the seeds dry completely before storing or they will go mouldy. Store in a sealed container in a cool and dry place. Remember to label your seeds with the name and date of when they were collected .