How to
Grow Catnip

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Perennial, Biennial, Nepeta Cataria

Yes it true! Cats love Catnip! There was a time I did not believe it myself, and thought it was just a fictional joke in cartoons. They love to nip the leaves. They love to roll in it. They sometimes will take a nap in a bed of it. They just plain love it. And, you will too.

A member of the Mint family, Catnip is a strong smelling, aromatic herb. It has clusters of white or purplish-blue flowers atop toothy, heart shaped leaves. There is also an uncommon yellow variety. The leaves have a lemon-mint flavor and scent. It is fun to grow for your kitties and for tea for you.

Catnip is a perennial, and grows two to three feet. It is native to North America. In addition to cats, bees are also fond of Catnip.

Propagation:

Grow Catnip plants from seed. Sow seeds into your garden in the spring. Space seedlings or thin plants to 20” apart. When growing catnip, allow for plenty of space. It will overcrowd nearby plants in your herb garden if allowed.

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How to Grow Catnip:

Catnip is easy to grow. They thrive in sun or partial shade. They prefer average, well drained soil over rich soils. They grow well with little attention, and will withstand crowding. Fertilizer is not usually required, except in the poorest of soils. We always recommend a little fertilizer at planting time, and a couple of times a year to promote maximum growth.

After the plants have grown a few inches, pinch back the shoots to promote bushy growth. It will first bloom in midsummer. After harvest, trim back the plants again. With luck, you will get three harvests in a season. Catnip is an aggressive grower, crowding out other plants if given the chance. Give them plenty of space away from other plants in your garden, or, better still, surround it with a border edging. Harvest leaves as the flowers begin to bloom. Cut off the top leaves, stems and flowers. They can be used fresh, dried, or frozen. Spread leaves out to dry in a cool and ventilated area.

Main Uses:

The most popular use of Catnip is for cats. Rubbing oil on your cats' toys will drive them wild. With a lemony mint flavor, Catnip is also used cooking and especially in herbal teas.

Medicinal Uses:

Catnip is often used in treating colds and cold symptoms.