

## Local Farmers Markets Locations throughout

### Southwest Mississippi

<u>County</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>Telephone #</u>
1. Adams	Natchez	601-442-4648
2. Copiah	Crystal Springs	601-892-3731
3. Hinds	Jackson	601-354-6573/ 601-359-1159
4. Lincoln	Brookhaven	601-835-3460
5. Pike	Magnolia	601-783-6572
6. Pike	McComb	601-684-8599
7. Walthall	Tylertown	601-684-8599
8. Warren	Vicksburg	601-634-9484



**Basil (*Ocimum selloi*)**

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## Common Types of Basils

### Medicinal Usage:

- Holy Basil (*Ocimum tenuiflorum*)

### Culinary Usage:

- Sweet Basil (*Ocimum basilicum*)
- Lemon Basil (*Ocimum citriodorum*)
- Cinnamon Basil (*Ocimum basilicum* cinnamon)
- Pepper Basil (*Ocimum selloi*)

*Sources: Davis, J.M. 1997. Department of Horticultural Science, North Carolina State University Extension Service.*

*Sims, C.A. 2010. Development of Production Systems and Chemical Profiling of Basil (*Ocimum tenuiflorum*).*

*USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service. 2011*

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# Basil: An Alternative Niche Market Crop



**Basil (*Ocimum basilicum*)**

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**EXTENSION  
PROGRAM**  
ALCORN STATE UNIVERSITY

## Basil

Basil (*Ocimum spp.*) is a popular herb grown for the fresh produce, medicinal use and as an ornamental plant worldwide. Basil belongs to the mint family, Lamiaceae (Labiatae) and grows up to 2 ½' in height and about the same in breadth. Basil has been validated for a wide spectrum of medicinal properties ranging from common colds to complex diseases such as cancers and diabetes.

## Planting

All basil plants are tender annuals which are very susceptible to cold weather. They should be planted in late spring after all danger of frost has past. They enjoy full sun in warm, well drained soil. Raised beds are highly recommended because they promote good drainage and warm quickly in the spring.

Basil may be grown in the field from seeds or transplants. For direct seeded crop, sow seed thinly (8-10 seeds per inch) in a well prepared seedbed. About 6 lbs. of seeds are required to seed one acre.

Basil may be grown as transplants in the greenhouse and transplanted into the field after 4-6 weeks during in late March to early April for Southeastern Mississippi.

## Spacing

Plant basil in 2-3 feet rows, depending on cultivation equipment, and 6-12 inches within the row. Planting may be staggered to provide continuous supply of fresh leaves throughout the growing season. For fresh-cut basil production, the use of mulch is highly recommended. Mulch conserves moisture, reduces weed growth, and keeps the basil leaves clean. The use of black polyethylene or hardwood bark and straw may be applied.

## Fertilization

Do not over fertilize basil or the flavor will be sacrificed for growth. Although specific recommendations are not available, generally it is suggested that 100 lbs. each of N, P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub> and K<sub>2</sub>O per acre be broadcast and incorporate at the time of planting. If more than one harvest is made, side dress with 15 to 30 lbs. of N per acre shortly after the first or second cutting.

## Irrigation

Basil will not tolerate moisture stress. Provide a regular supply of water through drip or overhead irrigation systems.

## Harvesting

Foliage may be harvested whenever four sets of true leaves can be left after cutting to initiate growth, but when harvesting for fresh or dried leaves, always cut prior to bloom. For small scale production of fresh-market basil, the terminal 2-3 inch long whorls of leaves may be cut or pinched off once or twice a week. This provides high quality product with little stem tissue present.

## Using Basil

Basil has value for its beauty as well as flavor. Fresh or dry leaves can be added to stews, soups, sauces, as well as meat, fish or egg dishes. Basil can be used to season salads and vegetables and flavors teas and vinegars or steeped into flavored oil.

Salads and flavored vinegars are best with purple basil. It is also the best choice for annual gardens and flower displays.

Scented basil, like cinnamon or lemon, add a special touch to dishes with delicate flavor. Basil is used in jellies, jams, and even sorbets.

Tomato dishes benefit from basil adding to the flavor or pizza, spaghetti sauce, soup, dressings, salads, sausage, virtually anything tomato-based. When blended with pine nuts, oil and cheese in appropriate amounts, it creates pesto. Often considered mainly for main courses, basil can add flavor to fruit desserts.

## Medicinal Use

Treatment for diabetes reducing blood glucose levels, reduction in total cholesterol levels, cataracts, remedy for cold and cough, reduces fever, alleviate stress levels, etc. It is known as "The Wonder Herb".