



## SAVORY

WINTER SAVORY - *Satureja montana*  
SUMMER SAVORY – *Satureja hortensis*  
CREEPING SAVORY – *Satureja repanda*



### International Herb of the Year 2015

Savory has been used to flavour food, and as a strewing herb for over 2000 years, the Romans introducing the herb to England where it was used both in cooking and medicinally. The Saxons named it savory for its spicy, pungent taste. The Latin name “satureja” comes from the word “satyr”, the mythical half-man half-goat. Legend has it that this was his herb.

**Family** Lamiaceae

**Common names** Bean herb, Pepper herb,

**Description** Winter savory is a low-growing shrubby perennial, requiring a well-drained, sunny situation. It needs regular watering in dry weather. The small dark leaves grow on woody stems and in summer flowering stems grow upwards. Dainty white flowers appear at the tips. Trim and remove dead wood after flowering. Dry these tip cuttings and store for winter use.

Winter savory grows well in containers and can be moved to a more sheltered position in cold weather to ensure a continued supply of usable leaves.

Propagate by cuttings or by seed gathered in summer. The spreading stems naturally layer themselves and form roots where they touch the soil. Cut these off and pot up.

Summer savory is an annual, grown from seed in spring. It grows more uprightly with bigger leaves and sparser foliage. Seeds may be slow to germinate and can be soaked in hot water before sowing. Plants need rich light soil and full sun.

Nipping out the growing tips will encourage the plant to bush and ensures a continued supply of tender young shoots to use.

The leaves of Creeping Savory are softer and less pungent. As the name suggests this variety grows as a ground cover, making it an ideal plant for rockeries or clay pots with side pockets. The white flowers, as with the other savory varieties are a magnet for bees.

**Medicinal** Savory is best known medicinally as a carminative and a powerful digestive aid. For this reason it is paired successfully with all kinds of beans.

Savory as with other plants in the Lamiaceae family contain the essential oils carvarol, cineole, and thymol, which are found to have antibacterial, antiseptic, and antifungal applications. Savory can use instead of sage and thyme for coughs, colds and sore throats.

Once thought to be a powerful aphrodisiac the monks of the Benedictine order were banned from growing it in their monastery gardens.

The fresh leaves are an instant first aid for insect stings suffered while working in the garden.

**Cautions :** Winter savory should not be taken during pregnancy due to the high levels of Thymol in the herb.

**Cooking** Described as having hints of both thyme and marjoram, all species have similar hot peppery Flavours.

- winter savory should be added to a dish during cooking, not eaten raw.
- traditionally used when cooking dried beans and pulses as a digestive aid.
- can be made into a savoury jelly using grape juice.
- sprigs of fresh savory can be frozen with green beans or peas ready for use.
- add a sprig or two to vegetables when cooking, instead of mint.
- commercially used as a flavouring in salami.
- instead of pepper add chopped savory to any meat dishes for flavouring.
- it can be made into a refreshing 'pick-me-up' tonic drink, when bruised and added to white wine.

Savory combines well with thyme, rosemary, sage, bay or marjoram, and can be used with fish, chicken, meat, and vegetable dishes. Add savory leaves when cooking any vegetables of the brassica family (cabbage, kale, brussel sprouts, cauliflower). The herb will improve flavour and reduce the odour.

Savory along with oregano, thyme, rosemary and marjoram is one of the five herbs combined and used in "*Herbes de Provence*". This traditional mix flavours any dishes from the Mediterranean region especially pizza toppings, baked tomatoes or sprinkled over kebabs. Dried savory can be mixed with other dried herbs – thyme, rosemary or marjoram. Finely powdered use it as an alternative to salt, or use as a herbal rub and marinade.

With its hot peppery overtones dried savory makes an effective and safe condiment to use for those on specialised or bland diets.

### SAVORY ZUCCHINI

Cut the zucchini in half lengthwise and place cut side up in a greased oven-proof dish. Sprinkle with chopped bacon, breadcrumbs and savory leaves. Dot with a little butter and cook in a moderate oven until tender. Other vegetables can be used – pumpkin, potatoes, kumera or mushrooms. Grated cheese can be added or be used instead of the bacon.

### SAVORY HERB BUTTER

2 tbsp butter, softened	1 tbsp grated parmesan
1 tbsp minced garlic	2 tbsp finely chopped savory

Blend all ingredients together, spread on vegetables, crackers or bread.

### **References**

Winter Savory – Marilyn Wightman – Herb writer for Weekend Gardener  
How can I use herbs in my daily life – Isabell Shipard. 2004. "Savory" page 291  
[www.growing-herbs.com](http://www.growing-herbs.com)

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