

~ Ask Granny Earth ~

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Basil

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**Lately I have been craving Basil. It's more like an obsession from deep inside or something. I buy it dried, fresh, and now I fantasize about planting it in the spring, lots of it, and all different kinds. I don't remember ever feeling this way about a plant before. Have you ever heard of this? What do you think it means?**

As a matter of fact I have heard of this and more. Have you done any research on Basil? Let's take a look at its medicinal properties and see if we can determine a reason for your obsession. It seems to me that your innate wisdom is telling you something.

Another thing that I've see happen, which I think is our connection with Nature and her wisdom, is when you have a 'weed' growing in your yard or garden that just won't die. You can dig it up, but it keeps coming back, usually stronger than before. Most often, if you will do research on this weed, you'll find that is just what you need to cure a specific condition in yourself,

or someone you love. So these are just two examples of how the wisdom of Nature is always trying to communicate with us- if we'll only listen.

**Basil (*Ocimum basilicum*):** It's thought that the origin of the name *basilicum*, comes from the Greek *basileus*, a king- because, "the smell thereof is so excellent that it is fit for a king's house." Native to India (where it is the most sacred plant, next to the lotus), Basil was introduced into Europe in ancient times, and was brought to the New World by early settlers.

In our area, it is an annual herb, which needs planted anew each spring. You can let a few plants go to seed, and gather, dry, mark and store for the next season. Basil likes a sunny location that is protected from strong winds, and well-drained and moist soil. It grows from one to two feet high, has a quadrangular stem with leaves that grow opposite from each other and are smooth, soft and cool to the touch. The under-side of the leaves are grayish green and dotted with dark oil cells. The two-lipped flowers are white, grow in whorls of six in the axils of the leaves, and bloom from June to September. For culinary use, pick leaves when young. For medicinal use, gather tops as the flowers open.

We are most familiar with Basil as a culinary herb, because of its rich, warm, pungent flavor, which compliments garlic and tomato dishes. When used in food preparation, Basil should be torn apart with the fingers, rather than chopped or cut. Add at the last minute to cooked dishes, or sprinkle over salads and sliced tomatoes for a real taste treat. Basil's rich volatile oils, vary considerably within the species and according to growing conditions. Some of its main constituents in are: methyl chavicol (anise), methyl cinnamate (cinnamon), eugenol (clove), citral (lemon), geraniol (rose), linalol (lilac-orange blossom), thymol (thyme), and camphor. These 'chemotypes' are what gives Basil its wonderful fragrance and taste.

Now let's take a look at Basil's medicinal properties. Used internally, it's a restorative, warming herb that relaxes spasms, improves digestion, and is effective against bacterial infections and intestinal parasites. It is also used for nausea, gastroenteritis, abdominal cramps, migraine headaches, insomnia, low spirits (depression) and mental exhaustion. The oil of Basil is used in dental preparations and insect repellants. Externally Basil is good for rheumatism, lumbago, and hives when applied as a poultice.

But generally, Basil is associated with the stomach and its related organs. Here we might do well to remember that the liver is considered to be a 'related organ', and throughout history was considered to be the *seat of all negative emotions*.

So, what your obsession with Basil means is that it is just what you need for one of the above conditions. I would venture to say that first, you probably have some digestive, or gastrointestinal problems. Secondly, you could have migraine headaches, trouble sleeping, or mild depression. Do any of these symptoms/conditions apply to you? If so, Nature Devas are speaking to you

via esoteric energy. You would do well to listen to them.

The seeds of Basil can be made into a tonic (put seeds into glycerin and vodka on new moon and leave until the full moon, shaking daily), or you can make an infusion or tea of the leaves and flowers; put 1-2 teaspoons into 1-2 cups of boiling water. Steep, for 5-10 minutes. Strain and drink several cups a day with honey if desired.

Keep a journal of your progress as we have a tendency to forget when we started, how much we took, and what the daily reactions were.