



THYME (THYMUS SPP)

PLANT FACTS

Thyme (*Thymus spp*) is an aromatic **perennial evergreen herb** in the **mint family Lamiaceae**. It is native to Europe, North Africa, and Asia, and there are over 350 different species. Thymes are relatives of the oregano genus *Origanum* and are known for their **culinary, medicinal, and ornamental uses**. Thyme has been important in many cultures throughout history and was even found to be used for the process of mummification in ancient Egypt. In ancient Greece, thyme was seen as a symbol of courage. This herb gets around **1-4 inches tall and can spread 2+ feet wide**. Thyme **produces white, yellow or purple flowers**, arranged in dense clusters at the end of its branches. It is **self-fertile** and commonly **pollinated by wild bumblebees, honeybees, sweat bees, hoverflies, and wasps**.

GROWING INFO

Thyme is a very hardy herb (zones 5-9) and low-maintenance perennial groundcover. It tolerates foot traffic and drought and dislikes wet conditions. Thyme does well in **full sun and tolerates partial shade** (although it flowers more in full sun). Generally easy to grow, its main pests and diseases to look out for include red spider mite and humidity-induced rot. Harvest from July through September and for the best and most potent flavor, pick the leaves just before the plant flowers.

FALL/WINTER: As a perennial, the herb will die back a bit during the winter. Trimming off the dead flower heads can help keep the plant bushy.

SPRING/SUMMER: Fertilize with any type of balanced liquid plant food during late spring or early summer.

CULINARY & MEDICINAL INFO

Thyme is a delicious herb with **the leaves used often in many cuisines**. The leaves can be used fresh or dry for cooking. Thyme can help boost your immune system because it is **full of antioxidants** and it is also **a great source of vitamins C, B, E, K, and A**. It is also a source of **beta-carotene and folic acid**. The flowers are edible and research has shown them to be **great as an antifungal, antiviral, and warming respiratory and digestive tonic**. Essential oils extracted from the leaves and flowers **contain a substance called thymol which has antiseptic properties**. Thyme has also been used for the soothing of wounds, the prevention of infections, and in a treatment for cough, congestion, stomach pain and gout.

HOW TO ENJOY

- Recipe for Thyme Roasted Sweet Potatoes*
1. Preheat oven to 450 degrees F (230 degrees Celsius).
 2. Combine sweet potatoes, thyme, olive oil, garlic, salt, and red pepper flakes in a bowl until evenly coated. Arrange coated sweet potato slices in a single layer on a rimmed baking sheet or 9x13-inch baking dish.
 3. Place baking sheet on the top rack of preheated oven; roast until sweet potatoes are tender and slightly browned, about 40 minutes.
- 4 sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into
1 1/2-inch thick rounds
1/3 cup fresh thyme leaves
3 tablespoons olive oil
4 large garlic cloves, minced
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes

PROPAGATION

Take divisions of the root during cooler spring months from March to May. Cuttings of the plant can be taken in late spring or early summer. **Avoid fall transplanting due to cold winter frosts that could expose plants to freeze damage**. Thyme can also be started from seed and should be sown directly in the garden from May to August.



PHILADELPHIA
ORCHARD PROJECT