

# Culinary and Fragrant Herbs of Religious Symbolism

Most of our culinary and fragrant herbs were grown at one time in medieval-monastery gardens or used by missionaries, In this way they came to have popular names reflecting religious life and thought.

Some of the names came from the liturgical feasts in the Church calendar for which plants normally were in bloom or fruit. Others came from striking plant shapes which brought to mind events of the Bible or thoughts about the life of the Holy Family. Many fragrant, soothing and healing herbs were associated especially with Mary, the mother of Jesus, because they suggested her sweetness and maternal solicitude.

The following religious names of herbs have been gleaned from dictionaries and floras of the old and new worlds. It is hoped they will contribute to the lore of herbs and to the religious sense of herb gardening.

A summary of herb growth and uses has also been included. Further details are available from the many excellent herb books and nurseries.

The following abbreviations are used:

Growth: **Annual** **Biennial** **Perennial**, **Shrub**. Height in inches. Parts Used: **Flower**, **Leaf**, **Root**, **Seed** Uses: **Aromatic**, **Flavorlngs**, **Potherb**, **Salad Greens**, **Teas**

Botanical Name	Common Name	Religious Name	Gr	Ht	Parts	Uses	
<i>Achillea millefol.</i>	Yarrow	Our Lord's Back	P	36	1	AT	
<i>Allium schoenopras.</i>	Chives	Our Lady's Garleek	P	24	1	FP	
<i>Althea officinalis</i>	Marshmallow	Our Lady's Cheeses	P	48	1	P	
<i>Anethium graveolens</i>	Dill	Devil-Away	AB	36	ls	AFP	
<i>Angellca archangel</i>	Angelica	Angel's Plant	BP	72	r	AFT	
<i>Apium graveolens</i>	Celery	Virgin's Marsh Plant	AB	36	ltf	PFST	
<i>Artemisia abrotanum</i>	Southernwd	Our Lord's Wood	P	48	1	A	
<i>Artemtsia absinth.</i>	Wormwood	Mary's Tree	P 48 1	P	48	1	A
<i>Artemlsia pontica</i>	Rom. Wormwood	Our Lady's Needle	P	48	1	A	
<i>Asperula odorata</i>	Sw. Woodruff	Our Lady's Bedstraw	P	8	1	AT	
<i>Bellis perennis</i>	Engl. Daisy	Mary-Love	B	8	1	T	
<i>Borago officinalis</i>	Borage	St. Joseph's Staff	A	24	fwl	APST	
<i>Calendula officin.</i>	Pot Marygold	Marygold	A	24	f	FZT	
<i>Chrysanth.balsamita</i>	Costmary	Our Lady's Balsam	P	36	1	A,F,T	
<i>Cichorium intybus</i>	Chicory	Heavenly Way	P	72	fir	FtP	
<i>Coriandrum sativum</i>	Coriander	St. John's Head	A	36	ls	AF	
<i>Crocus sativus</i>	Saffron Crocus	Saffron	P	6	1	AFT	
<i>Cummin cyanum</i>	Cumin	Cross-Cummin	A	6	s	AF	
<i>Dianthus plumarius</i>	Clove Pink	Virgin Pink	P	18	r	AF	
<i>Foeniculum vulgare</i>	Fennel	Our Lady's Fennel	AP	60	ls	ASFT	
<i>Hierochloe odorata</i>	Holy Grass	Mary's Grass	P	24	1	AF	
<i>Hypericum perforatm</i>	St. Johnswort	Jesus' Blood Drops	P	24	1	T	

Botanical Name	Common Name	Religious Name	Gr	Ht	Parts	Uses
<i>Hyssopos officinal.</i>	Hyssop	St. Joseph's Plant	P	18	1	ST
<i>Inula helenium</i>	Elecampagne	Adam's Root	P	72	r	F
<i>Iris florin., blue</i>	Orris Root	Madonna Iris	P	18	r	A
<i>Laurus nobilis</i>	Sweet Bay	St. Bridget's Flower	T	40ftl		AT
<i>Lavandula officin.</i>	Lavender	Mary's Drying Plant	S	36	fls	AFS
<i>Levisticum officin.</i>	Lovage	Our Lady's Duster	P	72	lrs	F
<i>Lilium candidum</i>	Madonna Lily	Mary Lily	P	48	f	A
<i>Majorana hortensis</i>	Sw.Marjoram	Mother-of-God's Fl	AP	24	1	AFT
<i>Malva sylvestris</i>	Purp.Mallow	Our Lady's Cheeses	AB	36	lrs	P
<i>Marrubium vulgare</i>	Horehound	Mother-of-God's Tea	P	36	ls	FT
<i>Matricaria chamom.</i>	Gmn.Chamomile	Mary's Plant	A	24	fi	T
<i>Medicago sativa</i>	Alfalfa	Holy Hay	P	36	1	PT
<i>Melissa officinalis</i>	Lemon Balm	Sweet Mary	P	21	ls	AFT
<i>Mentha arvensis</i>	Japanese Mint	Our Lady's Plant	P	24	1	AFT
<i>Mentha crispa</i>	Curly Mint	Cross-Mint	P	36	1	AFT
<i>Mentha pulegium</i>	Pennyroyal	Our Lady's Flavoring	P	6	1	AFT
<i>Mentha requieni</i>	Spanish Moss	Mother-of-Thousands	P	2	1	AFT
<i>Mentha spicata</i>	Spearmint	Mary's Mint	P	24	1	AFT

<i>Monarda didyma</i>	Bee-Balm	Sweet Mary	P	36	fl	AT
<i>Myrrhis odorata</i>	Sweet Cicely	St. Barbara's Grass	P	36	1	S
<i>Nepeta cataria</i>	Catnip	Mary's Nettle	P	36	1	AFT
<i>Ocimum basilicum</i>	Basil	Holy Communion Plant	A	24	ls	AFT
<i>Origanum vulgare</i>	Pot Marjorum	Mary's Bedstraw	P	30	1	AFT
<i>Paeonia officinalis</i>	Peony	Mary's Rose	P	36	s	F
<i>Pelargonum lim.var.</i>	Lemon Geranium	Lady Mary	P	12	1	A
<i>Petroselinum crisp.</i>	Parsley	O.Lady's Little Vine	B	36	1	FPST
<i>Pimpinella anisum</i>	Anise	Our Lady's Sprig	A	24	ls	AFPT
<i>Primula veris</i>	Cowslip Our	Lady's Keys	P	8	fl	PST
<i>Primula vulgaris</i>	Primrose	Our Lady's Frills	P	6	fl	PS
<i>Rosa centifolia</i>	Cabbage Rose	The Virgin's Rose	P	72	fl	AFT
<i>Rosmarinus officin.</i>	Rosemary	Mary's Nosegay	S	72	fls	AFT
<i>Rumex acetosella</i>	Sorrel	(M. Bitter Sorrow)	P	36	1	A
<i>Ruta graveolens</i>	Rue	Herb O'Grace	P	36	1	F
<i>Salvia officinalis</i>	Sage	Mary's Shawl	P	36	1	AFT
<i>Salvia sclarea</i>	Clary	Christ's Eye	B	36	1	AF
<i>Sanguisorba minor</i>	Burnet	St. Anthony's Button	S	12	1	FT
<i>Satureja hortensis</i>	Sum.Savory	St. Joseph's Flower	A	12	1	AF
<i>Symphytum officinal.</i>	Comfrey	Abraham, Isaac, Jacob	P	36	1	T
<i>Tagetes lucida</i>	SweetM.Gold	Mary's Flower	A	18	f	A
<i>Tanacetum vulgare</i>	Tansy	Jesus-Wort	P	36	fl	F
<i>Taraxicum officin.</i>	Dandelion	(M. BitterSorrow)	P	8	1	FPT
<i>Thymus serphyllum</i>	Creeping Thyme	Mary's Bedstraw	S	5	1	AFT
<i>Thymus vulgaris</i>	Thyme	The Virgin'sHumility	S	8	1	AFT
<i>Viola odorata</i>	SweetViolet	Our Lady's Modesty	P	6	f	AF
<i>Viola tricolor</i>	Wild Pansy	Our Lady's Delight	AB	8	fl	T

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