

CATNIP

PRODUCTION AND CONSUMER CARE

INTRODUCTION

- Common name: Catnip
- Scientific name: *Nepeta cataria*
- Perennial herb in the mint family with a pungent fragrance attractive to cats
- Native to North America
- Grows to a height of 2-4 feet
- Light green foliage with small lavender flowers that grow on spikes up to 5' long
- Leaves have a lemon mint flavor and can be used in tea
- Hardy in zones 3-9

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

- Prefers average, well-drained media rather than rich media
- Aroma increases when grown in sandy soil or via the hydroponic method
- Grows well in sun or partial shade
- Prefers a pH between 6.1 and 7.8
- Generally thrives with little attention

PROPAGATION

- Can be propagated by seed, stem cuttings, or division
- Seeds can be started outdoors in late fall for a spring crop, or planted

indoors in early spring for transplant after threat of frost has passed

- Seeds should be sown 1/8" deep and germinate in 10-20 days
- When plants reach 2-5" tall, they should be thinned so they stand 12-18" apart

DISORDERS

- Spider mites
 - Keep humidity and moisture levels high
 - Provide shade to weakened plants
 - Spray with a hose to remove mites
- Catnip competes poorly with other plants so weeds can become a problem

CONSUMER CARE

- Pinch back shoots in spring to promote bushy growth
- Best harvested just before plants flower
- Cut down plants completely after first bloom to allow for re-growth and a second harvest
- Remove spent flowers to prevent self-seeding
- Attracts bees, butterflies, and birds

CULTIVARS AND SPECIES

- *Nepeta cataria*

- 'Citradora': lemon scent

- *Nepeta grandiflora*: giant catmint; dark green leaves and dark bluish-purple flowers
- *Nepeta x faassenii*: grayish-green leaves and blue flowers

References

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<http://herbgardening.com/growingcatnip.htm>
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