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## ENVIRONMENTAL HORTICULTURE

Environmental Horticulture #EH377



### DILL

#### PRODUCTION AND CONSUMER CARE

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#### INTRODUCTION

- Common name: Dill
- Species name: *Anethum graveolens*
- The name dill originates from the Norse word 'dylle' meaning to soothe or lull
- Native to Southwest and Central Asia
- Grows to 1-2 feet tall
- Slender stems and alternate, finely divided, delicate leaves
- Small white to yellow flowers
- Seeds are used as a spice
- Fresh and dried leaves (often called dill weed) are used as herbs

- Dill oil can be extracted from stems, seeds, and leaves
- Tea made from leaves or seeds can be used to treat colic, gas, and indigestion

#### GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

- Full sunshine required
- Prefers rich, well drained media
- Low salinity tolerance
- Will grow in acid, neutral, or basic media
- Requires 12-18 in. of water during the growing season
- Seed yields decrease under high temperatures

- When growing in containers, use a deep container to accommodate long roots
- Dill responds well to fertile soil. 60 lbs/ac nitrogen and 30 lbs/ac phosphorous are required; fertilize when the plant starts flowering.

### PROPAGATION

- Should not be transplanted
- Seeds should be planted directly outdoors in cool weather
- In temperate climates, plant seeds a week or two before the last frost
- Seeds should be sown closely together
- Seeds should be placed at a depth of ¾ to 1 inch
- Cover seeds lightly until germination, approximately 10-14 days
- Dill sprouts easily and will self-seed

### DISORDERS

- Blight (*Phoma anethi*)
  - Seed borne disease that severely damages seed heads
  - Clean seeds and grow well away from previously infected areas
- Caterpillars are fond of dill and can be removed by hand
- Aphids can be a problem
  - Apply soap sprays

### CONSUMER CARE

- Should not be grown near fennel, caraway, or angelica
- Leaves are best used fresh; dill loses flavor rapidly if dried
- Plants will go quickly to seed if not cut regularly
- Once seedheads begin to form, stop cutting leaves for fresh use

- When harvesting for oil, should be cut when seed clusters begin to turn brown
- Seeds are harvested by cutting the flower heads when the seeds begin to ripen
- To dry seeds, place upside down in a paper bag and store in a warm dry place for a week
- Seeds are viable 3-10 years

### CULTIVARS AND SPECIES

- *A. graveolens*
  - 'Fernleaf': small variety for restricted growth space
  - 'Long island mammoth': recommended for seed harvesting
  - 'Bouquet': recommended for seed harvesting
  - 'Dukat': strong flavor and high oil content
  - 'Hercules': best fresh leaf variety
  - 'Vierling': blue-green leaves, strong stems, popular cut flower

### References

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dill>  
<http://www.gardenguides.com/plants/info/herbs/dill.asp>  
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