

ENVIRONMENTAL HORTICULTURE

Environmental Horticulture #EH382



FRENCH TARRAGON PRODUCTION AND CONSUMER CARE

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INTRODUCTION

- Common name: French tarragon
- Scientific name: *Artemisia dracunculus*
- Native to northern Europe and Asia
- Name originates from the French *esdragon*, meaning 'little dragon'
- Aromatic, clump forming, shrubby perennial
- Reaches a height of 2 feet with an 18 inch spread
- Flowers are produced in small capitulae 2-4 mm in diameter
- Hardy to zone 3
- Grown for its distinctively flavored leaves
- Has antibacterial qualities and is a mild numbing agent

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

- Prefers rich, sandy, well-drained loam in full or partial shade
- Grows well at a pH of approximately 6.9
- Mulch with shredded bark for winter protection

PROPAGATION

- Flowers are usually sterile and do not yield viable seed
- Plants can be propagated by stem tip or root cuttings
- Plants should be divided every 3-4 years to remain productive

- Division should take place during the dormant period, autumn or early spring
- Gently pull a piece of root apart from the main plant, making sure a dormant bud is attached
- Lay to root in a well drained organic cuttings mix

DISORDERS

- Root rot (*Rhizoctonia solani*)
 - Leaves turn yellow and the plant grows slowly
 - Prevent by providing good soil aeration and drainage
 - Remove and burn infected plants
- Powdery mildew (*Erysiphe cichoracaerum*)
 - White fuzzy coating on upper leaves
 - Foliage will eventually wilt and drop
 - Spray with a solution of 1 tsp. baking soda to 1 quart water

CONSUMER CARE

- Keep a supply of fresh tips by cutting back to the ground several times during the growing season
- Transferring indoors during winter is recommended because wet soil can prevent the plant from coming back in the spring

- Does not dry well; freezing is the preferred method of storage

CULTIVARS AND SPECIES

- *Artemisia dracunculus* (French tarragon)
 - Widely used in the culinary arts
- *Artemisia dracunculoides* (Russian tarragon)
 - Can be grown from seed
 - Hardy, vigorous plant
 - Much weaker in flavor than French tarragon
- *Tagetes lucida* (Mexican tarragon)
 - heat and drought resistant
 - grown as a substitute for French tarragon in warm climates

References

<http://www.superbherbs.net/Frenchtarragon.htm>

<http://www.tastefulgarden.com/Tarragon.htm>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tarragon>

http://www.organicgardening.org.uk/todo_now/french_tarragon.php

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