
ENVIRONMENTAL HORTICULTURE

Environmental Horticulture #EH381



SAGE

PRODUCTION AND CONSUMER CARE

Thomas M. Blessington, David L. Clement, and Kevin G. Williams
Central Maryland Research and Education Center
University of Maryland

INTRODUCTION

- Common name: Sage
- Scientific name: *Salvia officinalis*
- Latin name *salvia* means 'to heal'
- Native to southern Europe and the Mediterranean region
- Decorative evergreen shrub with downy gray to gray-green foliage
- Attractive purple-blue flowers appear in midsummer
- Leaves have a lemony, slightly bitter fragrance
- Grows to 2 feet high with a spread of 18 inches
- All common cultivars make beautiful accents in borders and rock gardens
- Hardy to zone 7

- Used for flavor in cooking and food preservation
- Has antiseptic qualities and boosts the action of insulin
- Used as an ingredient in perfumes and soap

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

- Grows best in a warm climate
- Requires well drained media in full sun.
- Prefers soil with a pH of approximately 6.4
- Tolerates drought and poor soil fertility
- Water freely during the growing season

- To encourage foliage, prune frequently

PROPAGATION

- Sage can be grown from seed and germinates within nine days
- Seed stores poorly so germination should be tested to determine the percentage of viable seed.
- Transplant seedlings when they reach 3” tall
- Can be propagated from 4” cuttings

DISORDERS

- Powdery mildew (*Erysiphe cichoracaerum*)
 - White fuzzy coating on upper leaves
 - Foliage will wilt, brown, and drop
 - Reduce humidity and remove infected foliage
- *Verticillium* wilt
 - Fungal infection of the vascular system
 - Leaves turn yellow and the plant wilts
 - Rotate crops and remove diseased plants
- Root rot (*Phymatotrichopsis omnivora*)
 - Leaves turn yellow
 - Provide good soil aeration and drainage
 - Remove infected plants
- Spider mites
 - Heavy infestations destroy leaves
 - Spray with water or an insecticidal soap

CONSUMER CARE

- Harvest lightly in the first year after planting
- In spring of the second year, prune back severely
- Replace plants every 4-5 years
- When harvesting, leave a few leaves on the plant
- Best used fresh, but can be dried

CULTIVARS AND SPECIES

- *S. officinalis*
 - ‘Purpurascens’: purple leaves, strong flavor
 - ‘Tricolor’: white, yellow, and green variegated leaves
 - ‘Berggarten’: large leaves
 - ‘Icterina’: yellow-green variegated leaves
 - ‘Alba’: white flowers
 - ‘Lavandulaefolia’: small leaves

References

<http://www.superbherbs.net/sage.htm>
<http://www.gardenguides.com/plants/info/herbs/sage.asp>
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Common_sage
<http://www.mountainvalleygrowers.com/salofficinalisgarden.htm>

Mention of trade names does not constitute an endorsement by the Maryland Cooperative Extension, University of Maryland, College Park, or University of Maryland, Eastern Shore.