

# BASIL



Celebrate the fresh, fragrant flavor of Nebraska-grown basil this month! Known for its bold aroma and bright green leaves, basil adds something special to everything from pasta to lemonade. Basil grows well in warm Nebraska summers and can even be grown at home in a pot or garden. Whether you prefer sweet Genovese, spicy purple, or lemon-scented varieties, basil is more than just a garnish—it's an herb full of flavor and history. This month, we'll explore how to grow, store, and cook with basil in simple and delicious ways.

## SELECTION, STORAGE & COOKING

- Choose basil with vibrant, green leaves and no signs of wilting or yellowing.
- Keep fresh basil in a glass of water on the counter (like cut flowers) for 1–2 days or wrap loosely and refrigerate for up to 5 days.
- For long-term storage, basil can be chopped and frozen in olive oil or turned into freezer-friendly pesto.

## NUTRITIONAL VALUE

Basil contains antioxidants and anti-inflammatory compounds, including vitamin K, vitamin A, manganese, and essential oils like eugenol, which have antibacterial properties.

## SEASONAL AVAILABILITY



## STRAWBERRY BASIL LEMONADE

### Ingredients

- 1 cup fresh strawberries, hulled
- 1/4 cup fresh basil leaves
- 3/4 cup lemon juice (about 4–6 lemons)
- 1/2 cup honey or sugar (adjust to taste)
- 4 cups cold water
- Ice and extra basil or lemon slices for garnish

### Directions

1. In a blender, combine strawberries, basil, lemon juice, and sweetener. Blend until smooth.
2. Strain through a fine mesh sieve into a pitcher to remove seeds and pulp (optional).
3. Add cold water and stir well.
4. Serve over ice with a basil leaf or lemon slice for garnish.



LEARN MORE ABOUT NEBRASKA HARVEST OF THE MONTH

[www.education.ne.gov/ns/farm-to-school/harvest-of-the-month](http://www.education.ne.gov/ns/farm-to-school/harvest-of-the-month)



# BASIL MATCHING

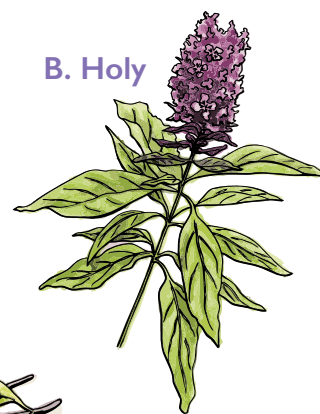
Match the corresponding variety name to the descriptions below.

1. \_\_\_\_ is known for its spicy, clove-like flavor.
2. \_\_\_\_ is the most common variety for making pesto.
3. \_\_\_\_ has a distinct licorice flavor and is commonly used in curries.
4. \_\_\_\_ has a citrusy flavor and is used in Asia and Africa for culinary and medicinal purposes.
5. \_\_\_\_ is traditionally used in Ayurvedic medicine for stress relief and immunity.

A. Thai



B. Holy



C. Lemon



D. Genovese



E. Red Rubin



# GROW YOUR OWN BASIL

## Materials:

- Small paper or plastic cup
- Potting soil
- Basil seeds
- Watering can or spray bottle
- Markers or stickers to decorate cups
- Sunlight or grow light access

## Instructions:

1. Decorate your cup!
2. Fill cup with potting soil, then plant 2–3 basil seeds about 1/4 inch deep.
3. Lightly water the soil and place the cup in a sunny window or under a grow light.
4. Watch your plants grow over the next 2–4 weeks, and don't forget to water regularly.

