

Erasmus+ Project

S. Angelo in Pontano 2019-2021



List of our Officinal Plants

- **THYME**
- **LAVENDER**
- **LEMON BALM**
- **CHIVES**
- **LESSER CALAMINT**



Officinal Plants that
are mainly found in our territory:

SPONTANEOUS GROWTH

- THYME
- LEMON BALM
- CHIVES
- LESSER CALAMINT

CULTIVATION

- LAVENDER
- THYME
- LEMON BALM
- CHIVES
- LESSER CALAMINT



Thymus
Serpyllum



Thyme - *Thymus vulgaris*

Thyme is an aromatic perennial plant belonging to the Lamiaceae family.

The name of the genus *Thymus* derives from an ancient Greek name whose meaning is strength, courage, quality that would awaken in those who smell its balsamic scent.



Thyme is a small shrub, evergreen and needle-like with very slow growth, and reaches a height of 10-30 cm.

As perennial and woody plants, they have a shrubby and very branched appearance. There are essential glands within these plants.

The aerial part of the stem is generally woody and erect or the stems are creeping and rooted at the nodes and ending with a leafy apex.



The leaves, just petiolate and not very large, along the stem are arranged in an opposite way (generally 2 to 2) and each subsequent pair is arranged at a right angle to the underlying one.

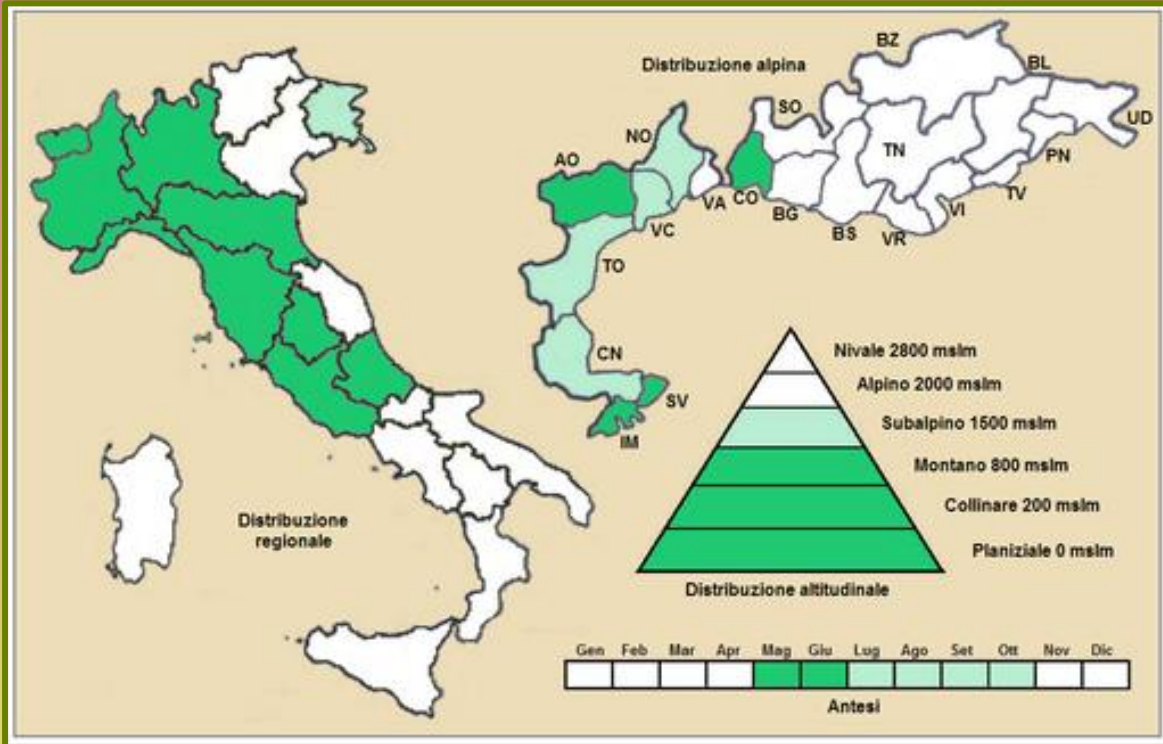
The shape can be ovate to lanceolate with whole margins. The leaves along the stem can be progressively larger upwards or vice versa or they are all the same. The colour varies from more or less intense green, to grey, to silver and are covered with a thick down.



The inflorescences are spikes formed by some flowers collected in whorls.

The flowers are hermaphrodite, the corolla is symmetrically ending in 4 lobes. The upper lip is bent upwards; the lower lip has three oblong lobes. The colour is white, cream, violet, pink-whitish, or from pink to purple.

The fruit is a dry, ovoid tetrachenium with a smooth and hairless surface.

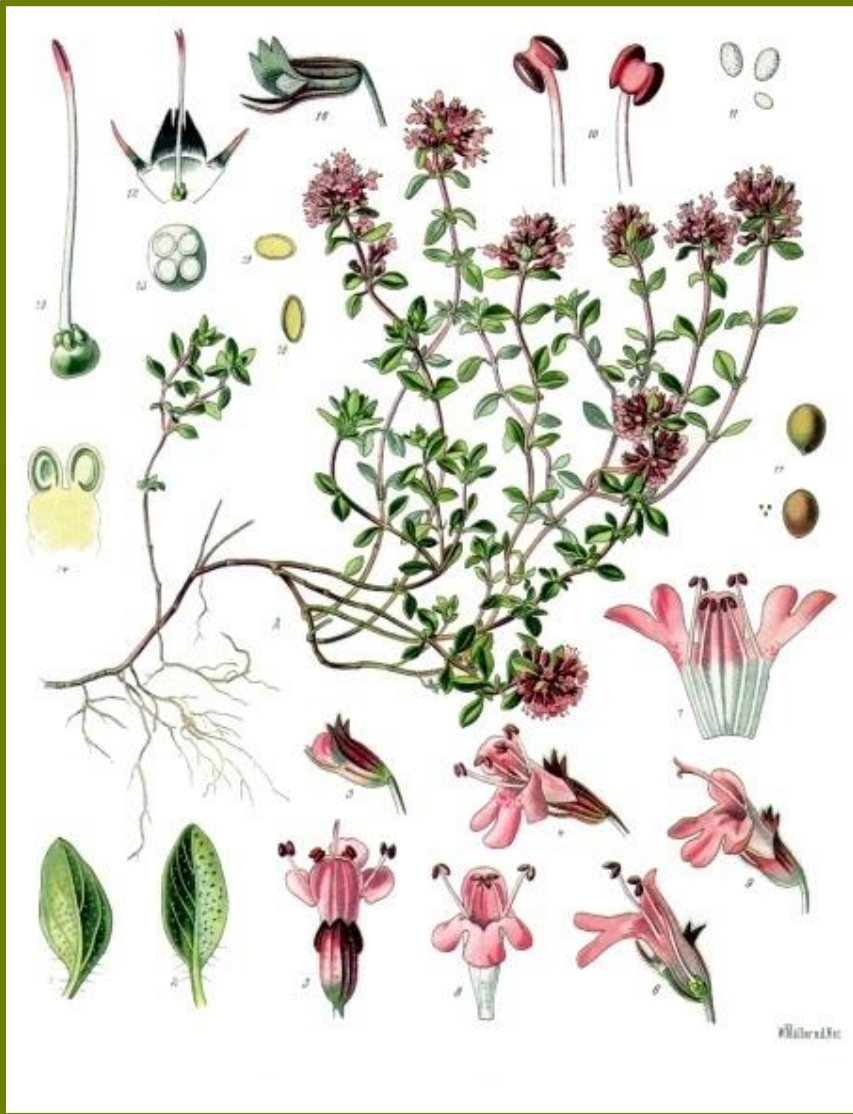


HABITAT

Thyme is a typical plant of the Mediterranean area and of the Caucasus. In Italy it grows from the sea to the mountain region (0 m - 2000 m a.s.l.), but it prefers marine areas. It is found in arid and sunny places, between rocks and gravel.

Among the ten species present on the Italian territory, seven are found in the Alps.

A very important group (comprising over 60% of the Italian flora species) is the *Thymus serpyllum* group (Serpillo, Serpolino and Pepolino), also widespread in our territories.



Thymus serpyllum

CURIOSITY

The essential Thyme oil was, with other oils, a basic substance used by the Ancient Egyptians in the embalming process.

Until the end of the First World War, the most common disinfectants were made with thyme.

USE OF THYME



Thyme has remarkable gastrointestinal antiseptic properties, known since ancient times.

It is effective in urinary tract infections.

The antibacterial properties are due to a phenol, thymol, contained in all parts of the plant and responsible for the strong scent.

Thymol, like other essential phenols, when in high concentration, is corrosive and toxic.



In herbal medicine, its use is recommended in diseases of the respiratory system, such as coughs or asthma, since it performs an expectorant function, increasing the production of bronchial secretion and facilitating its expulsion.

It can be used as an infusion or as a condiment in dishes, being an aromatic herb;

Thymes are excellent honey plants and good honey is obtained from them.

Finally, it can also be used to eliminate bacteria inside shoes, which often generate unpleasant odours.

Lavanda Angustifolia





Lavanda Angustifolia - LAVENDER

Officinal lavender or true lavender, also called spico or narrow-leaved lavender (also synonymous with *Lavandula officinalis*), is an evergreen plant of the Lamiaceae family. It distinguishes itself from broad-leaved lavender (lavender *latifolia*) which has wider leaves.

From the Latin "lavare" (which must be washed) because these species were widely used in antiquity (Middle Ages) to cleanse the body.



They are perennial and woody plants with a shrubby bearing. They can reach up to 120 cm in height. They are also highly aromatic. The roots are rhizome.

The aerial part of the stem is woody and erect.

The upper part is branchy with young herbaceous branches.

The leaves along the stem are arranged opposite each other. The lamina is whole with a linear - lanceolate contour and revolved edge. The leaves are fragrant and persistent.





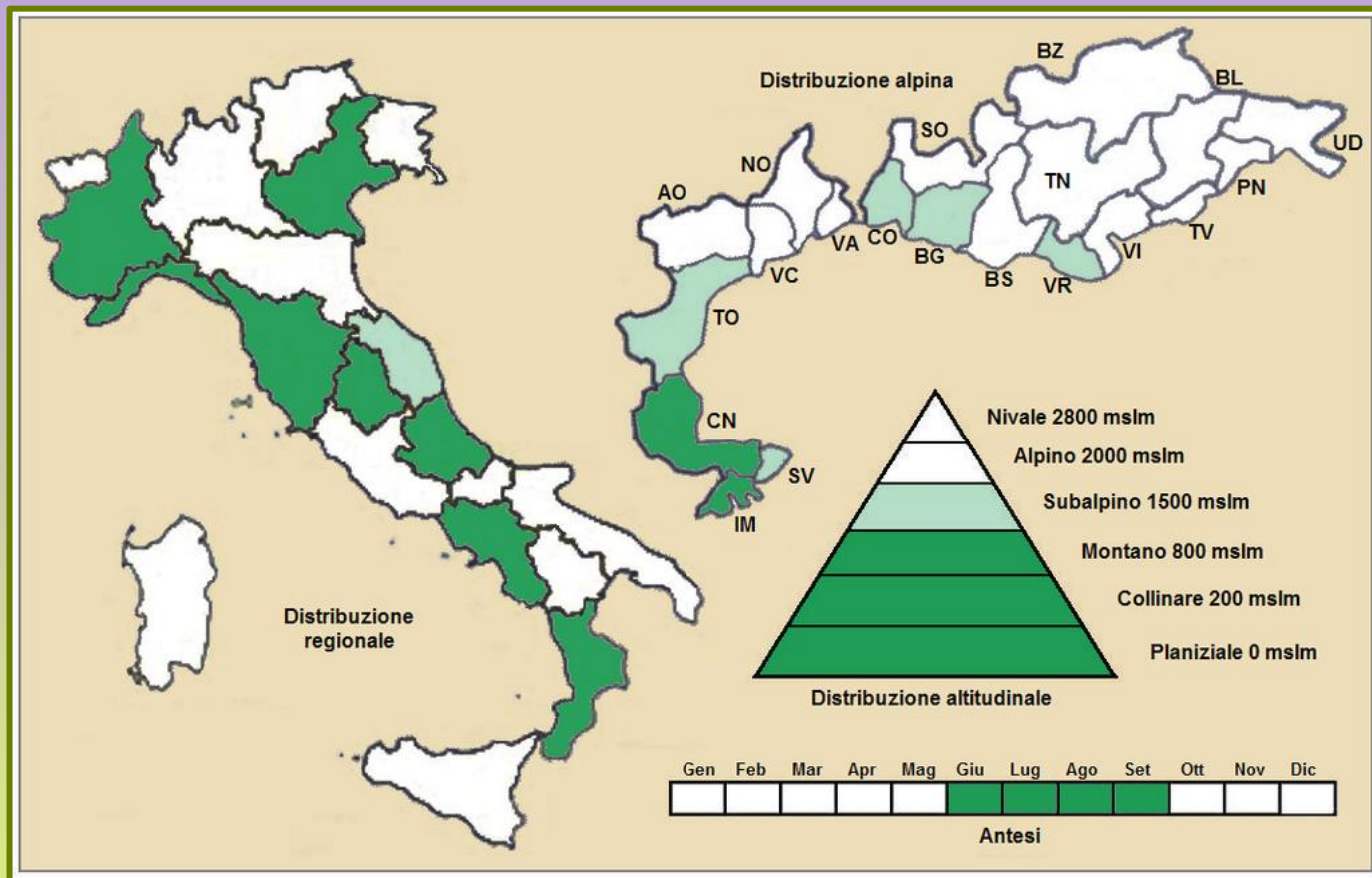
The inflorescences are 3 - 8 cm spikes. The flowers are arranged in whorls (6 - 12 flowers).

The flowers are hermaphrodites.

The corolla is weakly bilabiated with lobes of various shapes.

The colours vary from purple to purplish. Corolla length 9 - 12 mm.

Flowering: from June to September.



HABITAT

In Italy it is present erratically along the whole Tyrrhenian coast (islands excluded). Outside of Italy in the Alps this species is found in France.

In the rest of Europe it is distributed throughout the Mediterranean area.

The typical habitat for these plants are low spots but also arid and stony soils, exposed to the sun.

The preferred substrate is calcareous but also siliceous with neutral pH, low nutritional values of the soil which must be arid.



CURIOSITY

Lavender is a flower that symbolizes mistrust, its perfume attracts bees and wasps, so you must be careful when approaching the plant otherwise you risk a sting, which is why the flower is a symbol of mistrust.

It is given to remember to pay attention to something.

THERAPEUTIC USES OF LAVENDER

Among all the numerous varieties of lavender used for healing purposes, *Angustifolia* is considered fundamental for a number of reasons: first of all the essential oil produced from its flowers is extremely versatile as it blends well with other oils and is also attributed with manifold therapeutic actions.

In aromatherapy, it is used as an antidepressant, tranquilizer, balancing of the nervous system, as a decongestant against colds and flu. It is also considered effective for lowering blood pressure, for reducing digestive problems and is mixed with other homeopathic substances to treat back pain and earache.



USE IN THE KITCHEN

Lavender is widely visited by bees, which collect the nectar from which they produce excellent quality honey, but here the plant is not very common outside vegetable gardens and gardens, therefore production in Italy is scarce.

The flowers are edible and can be used to prepare sweets, biscuits or in risotto and dumplings.





Melissa Officinalis



Lemon Balm – *Melissa officinalis*

Lemon Balm is a small aromatic herbaceous perennial plant with delicate labia flowers belonging to the Lamiaceae family.

The name, according to mythology, refers to a nymph who would have invented the art of beekeeping.

The height of these plants varies from 50 to 80 cm.

In general they are herbaceous plants, with a perennial biological cycle, they have an erect floral axis and often without leaves. All parts of these plants have a pleasant smell of lemon and bergamot.

The rhizome (root) is normally horizontal.

The aerial part of the stem is erect and largely branchy, most of the plant is more or less hairless, especially at the base. The stems have a quadrangular section.





The arrangement of the leaves along the stem is opposite 2 to 2 and each pair is arranged at 90° with respect to the one below. They are petiolate with ovate-shaped lamina and obtuse base (wedged in the area of the inflorescence).

The lower leaves are more heart-shaped. The edges have rounded teeth on each side. The surface is sparsely hairy. The colour of the leaves is intense green in the upper part and light green in the lower part. The consistency of the leaves is slightly membranous, they are also sprinkled with oil cells; their appearance is very reminiscent of the nettle plant and the aroma is similar to that of lemon.



The inflorescences are formed by more or less spaced verticillasters composed of 2 - 14 flowers pedunculated at the axil of normal leaves.

The flowers are hermaphrodite, the calyx is tubular-bell-shaped, the corolla is bilabiate, the upper lip is formed by two lobes slightly folded upwards and close together, the lower lip, larger than the upper one, is formed by three lobes.

The colour is yellowish; after fertilization it turns white or pink.

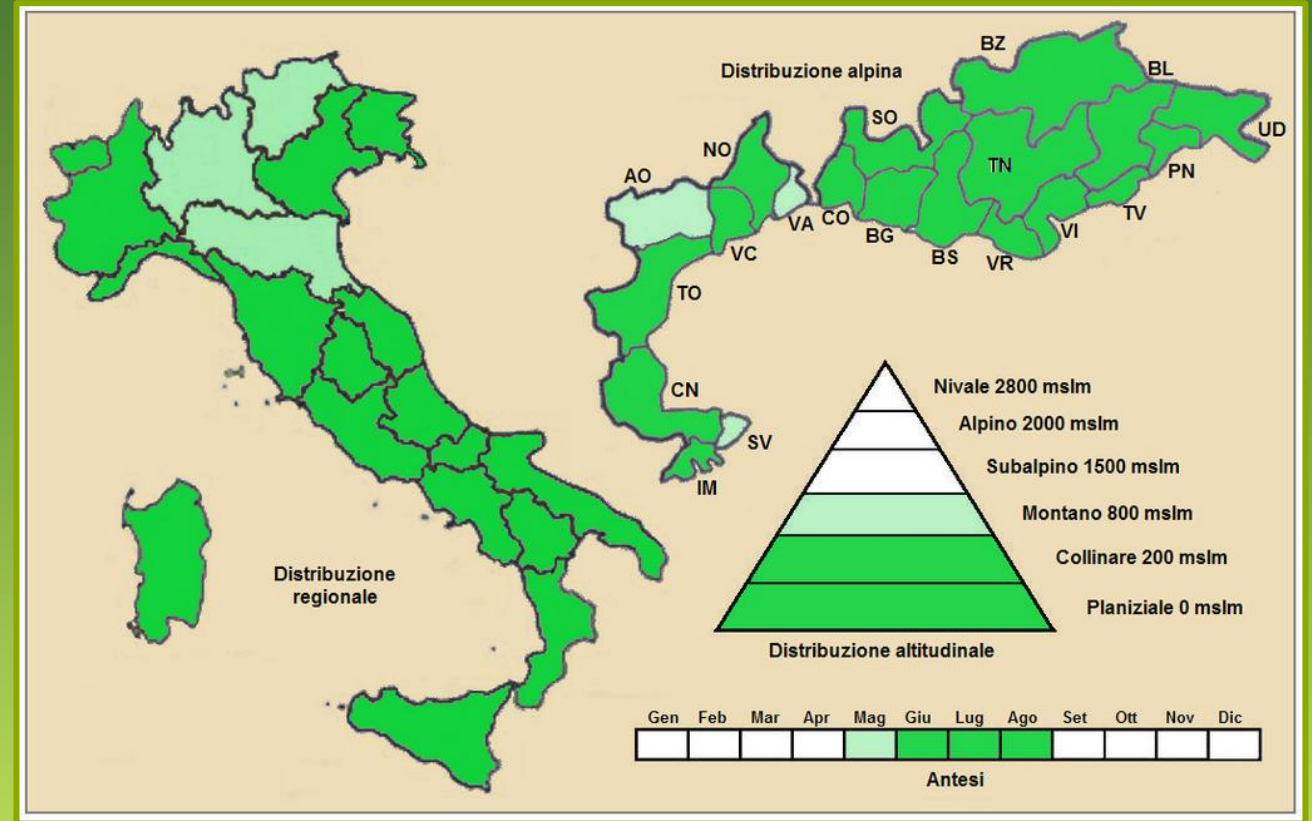
The fruit is a tetrachenium (dry fruit with 4 lodges).

Flowering: from (May) June to August.

HABITAT

In Italy it is a species that has become rare from a common one, and it is however present, in an erratic way, on the whole territory. In the Alps it is present everywhere. Outside Italy, always in the Alps, this species is found in France, Switzerland, Austria and Slovenia.

It is typical of the uncultivated, the ruins and the wild crops. It is often a plant grown for its aromatic properties. The preferred substrate is calcareous but also siliceous with neutral pH, high nutritional values of the soil which must be moderately moist.



CURIOSITY

It has been widely used in past centuries, in specialized preparations such as, for example, the lemon balm spirit, called "anti-hysterical water" because it is particularly useful for calming nervousness in young women. According to the doctrine of signatures, lemon balm is the Venus plant par excellence, that is, a medicinal plant for female ailments. In fact, known since the Middle Ages for its anti-hysterical and sedative properties, it is capable of curing gastric disorders and nausea from hyperexcitability, amenorrhea and dysmenoree of psychic origin.



THERAPEUTIC USES OF LEMON BALM

Lemon balm is known for its medicinal properties and is also highly appreciated as an aromatic herb and for the preparation of refreshing infusions with a citrus flavour (which has earned the name "cedronella"). The parts used are mainly the leaves, but also the flowers and stems, collected immediately before or during flowering.

In phytotherapy, Lemon balm leaves are mainly used but also flowers and stems. An essential oil is obtainable.

Currently Lemon balm is used as a sedative in anxiety states with visceral somatization and restlessness and also in gastro-intestinal dyspeptic pathologies thanks to its spasmolytic action and in the treatment of migraine.



USE IN KITCHEN

In popular usage, Lemon balm is appreciated as an aromatic herb: its fresh leaves are used to flavour many foods. The conservation of Lemon balm is done by cutting the plant when it is still in bloom: the branches are tied in small bundles and hung to dry in a cool and dry place. This kind of plant is also grown industrially: in fact, the fresh leaves and flowers are collected twice a year and distilled; the product obtained is the essence of Lemon balm which is used not only in perfumery but also in the preparation of spirits such as arquebuse, or liqueurs such as absinthe and chartreuse. In the kitchen it is used as an aromatic and officinal herb to flavour different dishes, the smell of lemon that emanates by rubbing the leaves is appreciated. Lemon balm is a good honey plant, but honey cannot be produced due to the sporadic presence of the plant, both cultivated and wild.

CONTRAINDICATIONS FOR USE



It is contraindicated for people suffering from glaucoma and suffering from hypothyroidism. There are no known controlled clinical studies in pregnant and breastfeeding women in accordance with general medical practice, the product should not be used without first hearing the opinion of a doctor.

Allium
Schoenoprasum





ALLIUM SCHOENOPRASUM – Chives

Chives (*Allium Schoenoprasum*) are at the same time an aromatic plant and an extremely decorative herbaceous plant to be inserted in flower beds, borders or even in the rock garden.

It also lives very well in a container, to be kept on the balcony or even on a window sill.



Characterized by deep green cylindrical hollow leaves, they generally grow up to 35 cm in length (but they can even reach 60 cm).

They form very dense tufts. Broken or handled, they emit a perfume similar to that of garlic or onion, but more delicate.

The root consists of a small bulb and a long root. Both of these parts are not edible.

The inflorescences, in the shape of a spherical umbrella, have a diameter of about 2.5 cm. The individual flowers that make it up (up to 30) are bell-shaped, light purple in colour (but there are also purple or white ones). They give off a good essence of honey and sprout from spring to summer, depending on the soil and climate characteristics of the area.

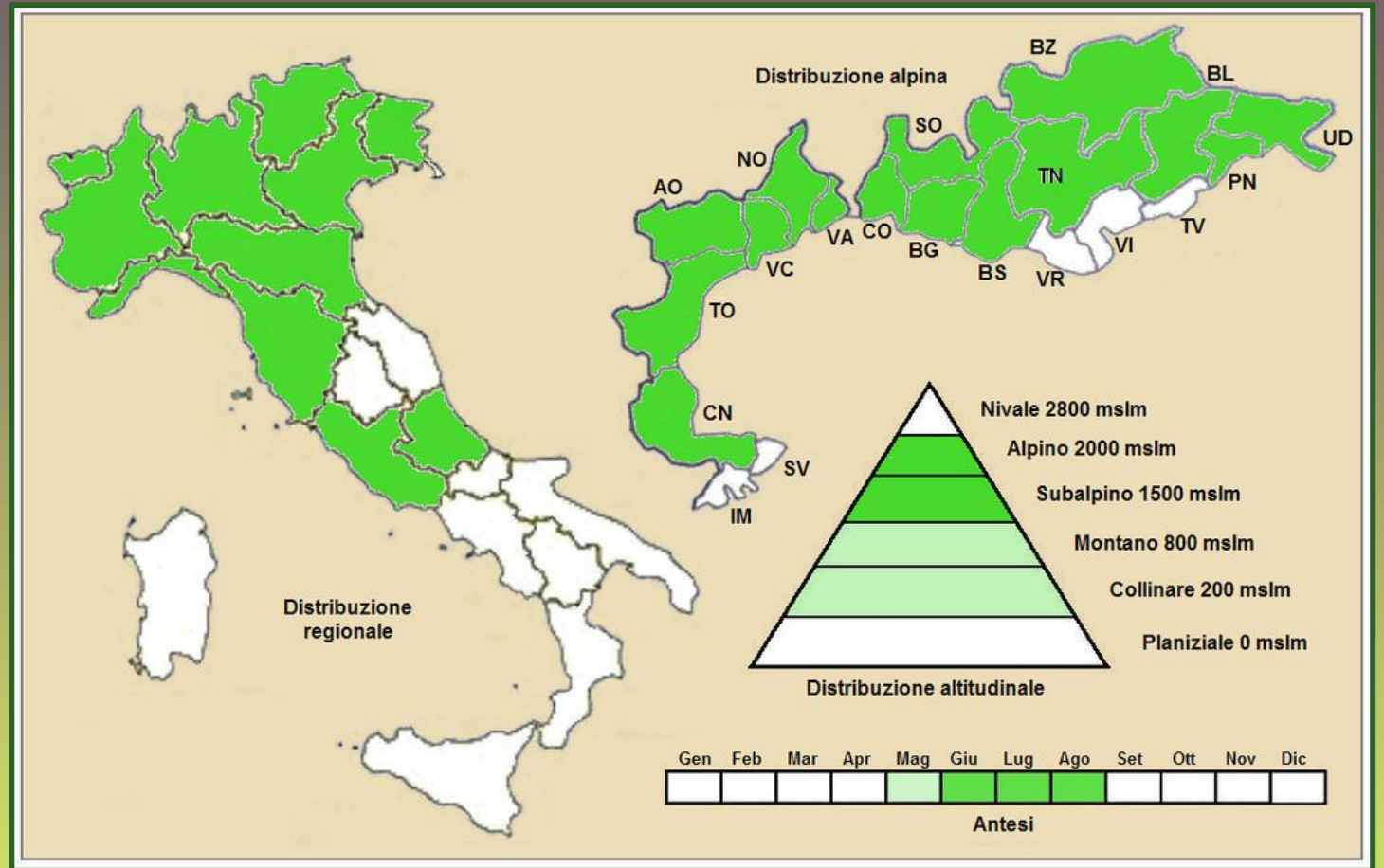
When they dry, they produce a capsule, usually containing two black seeds that germinate easily.

Harvesting is in the warmer months.



HABITAT

It adapts to any type of soil and it is easy to grow it everywhere. Today it is widespread in Europe and the United States, both in cultivation and spontaneously. Chives need a fresh, aerated and fertile substrate.



CURIOSITY

The ancient Celtic populations attributed magical properties to chives. According to some beliefs, the herb fought spells and evil spells. Traces of these ancient beliefs still persist today in the German popular tradition. German people, in fact, use rubbing chive leaves on themselves to free themselves from the spells cast by the Black Forest gnomes.

Today it is a very popular and cultivated aromatic plant, but, in all probability, it arrived in the West only around the VIII century AD, from China.



USE IN THE KITCHEN

Chives are frequently used in the kitchen. The leaves crushed with a mortar and mixed with butter form an excellent aromatic compound to flavour grilled meat and fish. Chopped chives, however, can season any type of salad. Chopped leaves can also flavour soups, sauces, eggs and meat dishes.



THERAPEUTIC USE



Chives are rich in vitamin C, phosphorus, potassium and essential oil. The latter has expectorant properties. It also has antiseptic, purifying and appetite stimulating properties and the production of gastric juices. In the form of an infusion, chives also have laxative effects. Both the flowers and the leaves of this plant can be consumed.

The former have a typical onion smell and can be useful for seasoning mixed salad. The leaves, on the other hand, more digestible than the actual onion, are used to season the sauté. The plant also stimulates blood circulation and has beneficial properties for the cardiovascular system.

Clinopodium Nepeta

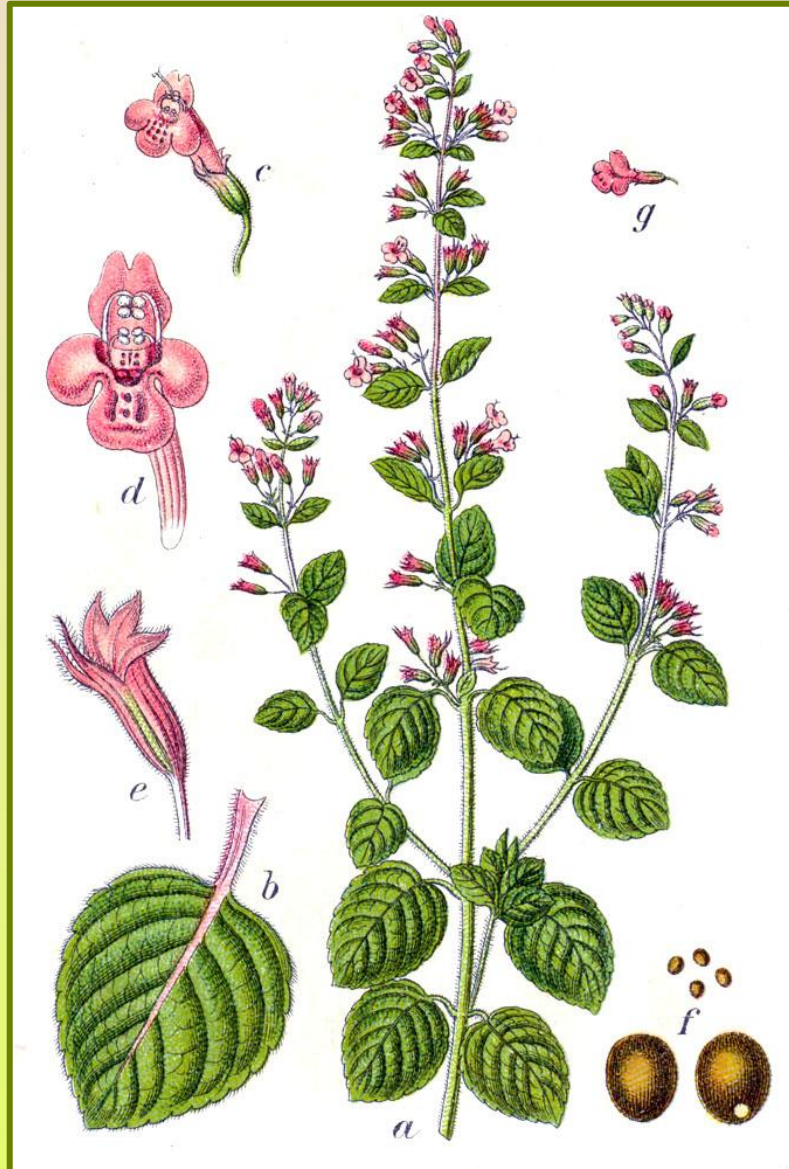




Lesser calamint – *Clinopodium nepeta*

Lesser calamint is an aromatic plant belonging to the Lamiaceae family.

The generic name (Clinopodium) derives from the Greek "klinopodion" (formed by two words: "klino" = slope, recline or bed and "podos" or "podios" = one foot).



It is a perennial and herbaceous plant, flowering begins in early summer and lasts until early autumn. These plants reach a height of 20–40 cm (maximum 80 cm).

It is equipped with an upright and often leafless floral axis. All parts of these plants have a slight mint smell.

Taproot root, stem with inclined hairs.



The leaves are arranged with opposite symmetry. The lamina has ovate forms with acute apices.

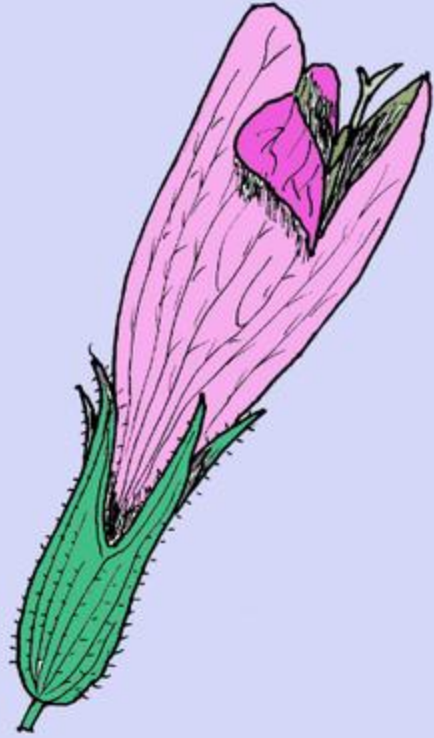
The edges are revolved and slightly serrated.

The inflorescences are leafy buds with 5 - 20 pedunculated flowers per whorl.

The flowers are hermaphrodites.

The shape is bilabiate, of the two lips, the upper one is bilobo, the lower one is trilobo. The colour is generally pale violet, almost whitish, with 2 violet spots in the centre.





A



B



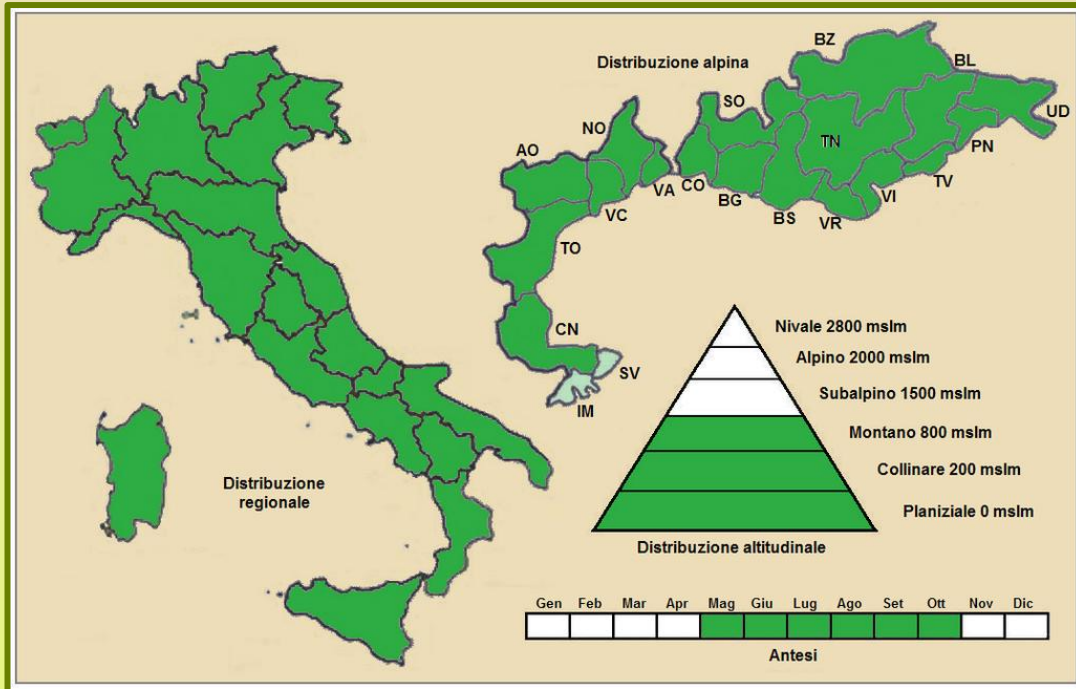
C



D



E



HABITAT

In Italy and in Europe it is common and it is found on the whole territory, it prefers the hilly – mountainous areas.

It prefers arid, uncultivated meadows along walls; but also the screes, the stony grounds, the herbaceous margins of the woods and shrubs. The preferred soil is calcareous and dry.

CURIOSITY

It is similar to mint in aroma, it is used in cooking to flavour meat, fish, mushrooms and especially artichokes. Among the various properties, it regulates the intestine and helps maintain the well-being of the whole organism.

THERAPEUTIC USES AND CONTRAINDICATIONS

Nepetella was commonly used as a medicinal herb and officinal herb in medieval times, but it is now little used by modern herbalists.

All parts of the plant have aromatic, diaphoretic, expectorant, febrifugal and stomachic properties.

The infusions obtained with the leaves are beneficial in case of flatulence and weakness of the stomach. It is also used against depression, insomnia and menstrual pain. It should not be taken during pregnancy as excessive doses can cause abortion.



USES IN THE KITCHEN AND CURIOSITY

It is a good honey plant. Honey can be produced but it is very rare, because although the plant is quite common, it is never abundant, however it is very bottled by bees and is a good source of nectar and pollen.

In Sicily it becomes part of the aromatization of table olives, for the taste and smell it transmits when placed in brine with them.

It is also used as an ingredient in the preparation of a typical Easter omelette. In general it is used as a condiment in the kitchen. In Lazio it is used for the preparation of Roman artichokes. In Irpinia it is combined with ricotta to make a filling for lean ravioli or omelettes. It is also used to prepare a particular aromatic liqueur. In Tuscany, it is used to season mushrooms.

In culinary use it should not be confused with Roman mint (*Mentha pulegium*), which has a much stronger flavour, which is used for the preparation of lamb and Roman-style tripe.





THANKS FOR YOUR
ATTENTION