

Kids Grow Fennel

Fennel is related to carrots and parsley. It has a white bulb with stalks, feathery leaves and seeds. All the parts are edible.

There are two types of fennel: 'bulbed' and 'seed'. The fat bulbs are cooked like a vegetable. Seed varieties are used like a herb and the crunchy stalks are good in salads.

Popular fennel varieties

'Florence fennel' (bulbed):

'Trieste'

'Zefa Fino'

'Herb fennel' (seed):

'Bronze Fennel' (or 'Purpureum')

'Rubrum'

'Smokey'

What you'll need:

- Fennel seeds
- Rake (if growing in the ground)
- Multipurpose compost and containers (if growing in containers)
- Watering can

Why should you eat it?

Fennel is packed with important vitamins and nutrients, including:

Vitamin B3

Helps lower cholesterol and keep your nervous system, digestive system and skin healthy.

Vitamin C

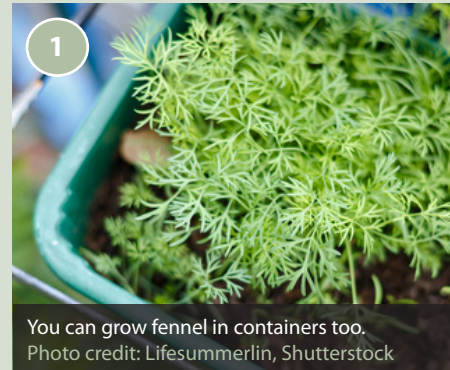
Good for your immune system, skin, blood vessels and bones - and helps with healing wounds.

Manganese

An 'antioxidant' that's good for your brain and nervous system.

MAGIC HERB!

In the Middle Ages, people put fennel over doorways at Midsummer to protect the household from evil spirits. They also put the seeds into keyholes to keep out ghosts!



Step 1: Choose your spot

- Fennel doesn't like to be moved, so decide where you want to grow it.
- If sowing in the ground, remove weeds and rake the soil.
- If growing in containers, fill a large pot with compost.
- Don't plant near tomatoes or potatoes: they don't like each other and won't grow well!



Step 2: Sow your fennel seeds

- Fennel hates dry soil, so water the ground before sowing.
- Sow your seeds 1cm deep and about 25cm apart.
- Plant 3-4 seeds in each hole, then just keep the strongest seedling.
- Cover with a thin layer of soil or compost.
- Gently water.



Step 3: Grow your fennel

- Fennel is a thirsty plant - keep the soil moist.
- If you don't water enough, fennel can 'bolt' (grow too fast and go to seed).
- Harvest leaves and seeds from spring to autumn.
- Your plant should be ready to harvest about two months after sowing.