

Table of Delights



PUKKA

LESSON PLAN FOR GROWING MINT AND MINT TZATZIKI

EARLY YEARS AND KEY STAGE 1/2/3

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Topic

Take your pick! The beauty of this recipe is that it can fit into all areas of the curriculum.

Aims

To work cross curriculum by teaching English, Maths, Science, Art and Design, Design and Technology, Cooking and Nutrition, Geography, History.

Age

Early years, 1, 2 and 3.

Level

Early years, Key stage 1, 2 and 3.

Time

Growing; Preparation time and planting time 1 hour

Cooking; Preparation time and cooking time 20 minutes



Recipe Materials

Try the recipe x by 4 and this means all the children will get to try the Tzatziki.

Food;

300ml plain or greek yogurt

½ cucumber, peeled and coarsely grated

Salt and pepper

Lemon

1 tsp dried mint (try pukka 3 mint tea!)

Fresh mint, finely chopped (from garden)

Cumin (optional), ground

Equipment;

Bowls

Tea towel

Knife

Grater - coarse

Tsp measurement

Flash cards for mint

(Optional) mortar and pestle

Introduction

In this cooking lesson the children will be learning the following skills;

- Weighing and measuring using spoons and cups, measuring liquids, (yogurt), using balance and digital scales. All ingredients.
- Cutting the lemon using a knife
- Harvesting and cutting the mint using scissors
- Mixing
- Grating and squeezing cucumber
- Decorating/presenting the tzatziki

Procedure

- See recipe for method.
- Make sure you clean all the environment before cooking. I recommend you buy a wipeable table cloth for the tables and store it away dry and only use it for cooking.
- Line the children up to wash their hands, put on an apron, tie their hair back and remove nail varnish.



- Weigh the ingredients out in a maths lesson the day before and set aside on trays. Put out the ingredients and equipment the night or morning before the cooking. Or weigh and measure the ingredients out for the children and lay out on the tables before the children arrive along with the equipment.
- The children could wash up if there is a suitable height sink and the water is not too hot. Or the adults clean as part of their clean down at the end of the day.

Follow up tasks

- Looking at energy wastage from kettle boiling (see sustainability below)
- Maybe a project on dairy products enriching their knowledge on cheese, milk and yoghurt. Using other spices (fennel, cumin, pepper) for flavouring. You could discuss lemons and cucumbers. Address yogurts that have a lot of sugar in them. Show how you could puree frozen, tinned and fresh fruit and stir it through the natural yogurt with the natural sugars as a sweet recipe.
- If you have lots of mint (which you might do if you are growing mint) try and think of another recipe including mint and cucumbers if you're growing cucumbers in school. Maybe something that could be put into a packed lunch like a sandwich. Or try the **LASSI LESSON PLAN INFO**
- Tzatziki is an excellent healthy dip for raw vegetables.

Health and safety

- Using a knife and grater. The adult would take charge of this and supervise, as there is often a risk of cuts..
- Lots of children can have an allergy to dairy. You can substitute the plain yogurt for soy or goat's milk yogurt.
- Keeping the yogurt at or below 4C, discuss why this temperature inhibits harmful bacteria growth
- Using the scissors to cut the herbs, the children's hands will be away from the blades but it's good to be aware that scissors have a sharp blade.

Healthy eating messages

- I recommend you make or buy some flash cards of fruit and vegetables and how they grow.
- Eat as part of a balanced diet. This recipe contains dairy (yogurt), cucumber, fresh herbs and lemon
- Increase the amount of fruit and vegetables. Working towards the 5 a day. By adding cucumber it could be classed as 1 portion. You could substitute the cucumber for any other vegetable that can be grated (carrot, courgette, beetroot) or chopped or served whole (tomato, peas, cooked green beans, spinach). Make sure you use these in season.
- Don't forget you can also use frozen or tinned vegetables
- High in dairy which is rich in calcium. It is vital for good bones and teeth.



- Unsweetened yogurt is a healthy alternative drink

Skills

- Weighing and measuring. The ingredients could be weighed and measured the day before as part of a numeracy lesson.
- Using a grater. The adult will supervise this when grating, and when washing up.
- Mixing. Teach the children to hold the side of the bowl with one hand and stir with the other, slowly, as some children mix very quickly and lose their mixture.
- Harvesting and preparing herbs
- Tearing the herbs. With early years you can ask the children to tear them using “their best tools” their hands.
- Chopping herbs. The best way to chop herbs is to place them in a plastic jug and put the herbs in the bottom of the jug. Ask the children to hold the handle of the jug and using scissors cut up the herbs. This way their hands will not get cut.
- Measuring water to put into kettle if making mint tea

Ingredients and cultural diversity

- Plain yogurt. Types of yogurt available. Alternative options use soy or goat’s milk yogurt.
- Lemon
- Dried Mint
- Cucumber - Options for changing seasoning to suit personal / cultural tastes.
- Mint. Fresh herbs, mint grows easily in England. You could grow some in a window box.

Provenance and sustainability

- It is grown in Great Britain.
- Describe what environment is needed for a plant to grow.
- You could talk to the children about the production of garlic.
- Yogurt normally is made from cow’s milk but you can buy soy or goat’s milk yogurt.
- Consider alternative vegetable that can be grated (carrot, courgette, beetroot) or chopped or served whole (tomato, peas, cooked green beans, spinach). Make sure you use these in season they are harvested in to reinforce seasonality.
- Consider alternative types of fresh mint, or even other herbs.
- Compare cost and nutrition of homemade and processed tzatziki. This would be great for key stage 2 children. It could be linked into a whole project on



dips. You could look at all the dips available to buy and compare nutritional and ingredients.

- Reducing energy waste - by measuring cups of water into kettle waste can be reduced;
- *e.g. - if everyone in the UK boiled just what they need when making a cuppa tea, the weight of the carbon we'd save is equivalent to 237 elephants - per day!*
- *e.g. - if everyone in a class of 30 boiled just what they need when making a cuppa tea, the weight of the carbon we'd save over a month is equivalent to 11 cats!*

Links to the national curriculum

English-

- Listen and respond appropriately to adults and their peers.

While the teacher demonstrates the children will be listening, responding and asking questions.

- Ask relevant questions to extend their understanding and knowledge.

The children will be encourage to ask questions on why certain things are done or added, for example what is going to happen in the blender.

- Use relevant strategies to build their vocabulary.

The children will be building their vocabulary by the teacher introducing new words including ingredients, methods of cooking etc.

- Articulate and justify answers, arguments and opinions.

The children will be encourage to share their opinions on ingredients and methods, likes, dislikes and why?

- Give well-structured descriptions, explanations and narratives for different purposes, including for expressing feelings.

It is a good idea to have a word bank on the wall of the classroom to increase and encourage feelings, descriptions, explanations etc.

- Maintain attention and participate actively in collaborative conversations, staying on topic and initiating and responding to comments.

All children will stay on topic as they will be too busy to engage in other activities. As all ingredients and equipment will be set out for them.

- Use spoken language to develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining and exploring ideas.

What will happen to the ingredients in the blender? What is the role of the fruit in the lassi? What will the lassi look like when blended, or taste like?

- Speak audibly and fluently with an increasing command of Standard English.



While demonstrated the teacher will be asking questions throughout, increasing their Standard English.

- Participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role play, improvisations and debates.

You could get the children to present their tzatziki and they could decorate them with fresh fruit etc.

- Gain, maintain and monitor the interest of the listeners.

The children will be watching and listening very closely. Especially if they are going to be asked to write a piece of work.

- Consider and evaluate different viewpoints, attending to and building on the contributions of others.

Evaluate how many children liked the preparation and decorating process and how they would change it/build on the skills and knowledge in the future.

- Working in a whole classroom environment or in small groups.

This recipe could be done in a whole classroom environment with 2 adults or in small groups of 6-8 with one adult, see below for details.

Ask the children to watch you add all the ingredients into the blender and once blended and served, ask the children to sit in a circle and taste all together. That way there is not a chance for a negative reaction before anyone else tastes it. Talk to the children before about it is ok not to like something but it important to try someone once. Then describe what it is about it they don't like.

Mathematics-

- Count to and across 100, forwards and backwards, beginning with 0 or 1, or from a given number.
- Count, read and write numbers to 100 in numerals, count multiples of twos, fives and tens.
- Given a number, identify one more or less.
- Identify and represent numbers using objects and pictorial representations including the number line, and use the language of: equal to, more than, less than (fewer), most, least.
- Read and write numbers from 1 to 20 in numerals and words.
- Add and subtract one-digit and two-digit numbers to 20, including zero.
- Solve one-step problems that involve addition and subtraction, using concrete objects and pictorial representations, and missing number problems.
- Solve one-step problems involving multiplication and division, by calculating the answer using concrete objects, pictorial representations and arrays with the support of the teacher.

All the above will and can be taught through weighing and measuring all the ingredients.



- Fractions-recognise, find and name half as one of two equal parts of an object, shape or quantity.
- Recognise, find and name a quarter as one of four equal parts of an object, shape or quantity.
- Pupils should be taught, Lengths and heights, mass and weight, capacity and volume, time.

This can be demonstrated with the liquid, water.

- Sequences events in chronological order using language for example before and after, next, first etc.

You have to add the mint first and then the yoghurt as you want the mint to blend in the bottom of the blender first.

- Recognise and use language relating to dates, including days of the week, weeks, months and years.

You can use the yoghurt for this and check the date and work out how many days the yoghurt has left before it turns bad.

- Recognise and name 2-D and 3-D shapes

What is cucumber?

- Choose and use appropriate standard units to estimate and measure length/height in any direction, mass, temperature, capacity to the nearest appropriate unit, using rulers, scales, thermometer and measuring vessels.

What shall we use to weigh and measure? Measuring jugs, scales, spoons, what makes the blender work? How much volume will the tzatziki increase by when blended.

- Read and write numbers up to 100 in numerals and in words.

You can ask the children to read the amounts of the ingredients that you are putting in the blender.

- Know the number of seconds in a minute.
- Compare durations of events (for example to calculate the time taken to particular event or task)

The two above will be taught through telling the children how long it takes to blend the tzatziki, look at the clock and let the children know where the big and little hand will be when it has blended. They could estimate how long it will take.

Science-

- Asking simple questions and recognising that they can be answered in different ways.
- Observing closely, using simple equipment.

The children will be observing closely while you add the ingredients into the blender. Using mixing bowls, spoons, scales, table knives, tsps., scissors.

- Performing simple tests.

You could test. Perform a taste test and you could convert this into a numeracy table during a numeracy lesson.



Ask the children to smell the herbs

You could make your own ice cubes, using an ice cube tray.

- Identifying and classifying.

What is liquid and what is solid and how you can change the structure, for example blending the herbs

Being able to identify a vegetable fruit from it having seeds-mango. Being able to name other vegetable fruits with seeds - tomato, pumpkin, aubergine

Will be taught through freezing the water to create ice.

- Using their observations and ideas to suggest answers to questions.

What will happen to the ingredients in the blender?

- Plants, identify and name a variety of common wild and garden plants, including deciduous and evergreen trees.

Where is mint grown and why? Spices- bushes and plants, cucumbers-where do they grow and why?

- Identify and name a variety of common animals including fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals.

Talk about the animal farm industry and you have milk cows and meat cows and you make yoghurt from milk. Also how fish is farmed and in particular, salmon.

- Identify and name a variety of common animals that are carnivores, herbivores and omnivores.

Identify all animals that we eat, farm animals. Explain it is an industry/business, farming and that is why there are animals in the fields. Try and visit a working farms, there are many farmers who would be willing to show school children around their farms.

- Describe and compare the structure of a variety of common animals.

A cow is a living animal, it has a heart, lungs legs etc. Be careful when discussing this subject teach to their age, you might find you have a few vegetarians after teaching. Remind the children depending on their age that there are dairy cows and meat cows, and the controversy around farming veal. (Key stage 3)

- Identify a name a variety of everyday materials including wood, plastic, glass, metal, water and rock.

You could talk about the blender/blade while talking about the safety of the blade, what are they made of? Why the blade has to be solid and the ingredients soft, why? Talk about the glass being perfect as we can see what is happening inside the blender.

- Observe changes across the four seasons.

If growing fruit and vegetables in school the children will have a far better understanding of the seasons and how it affects the growing and harvesting of fruit and vegetables. This is where you can talk about the mint and how it can grow all year round, see notes above.

- Observe and describe weather associated with the seasons and how day length varies.



Talk to children about what is grown in autumn and spring and the effect the weather has on the seasons and what grows at that time, also how mint can survive the cold but cucumbers need the warm of the sun. High light in the classroom when the sun rises and sets, the effect this has on the plants.

- Explore and compare the differences between things that are living, dead, and things that have never been alive.

You can talk through the ingredients, naming what was or came from a live animal. For example yoghurt/milk came from a live cow's milk and salt comes from the sea.

- Identify that most living things live in habitat to which they are suited and describe how different habits provide for the basic needs of different kinds of animals and plants, and how they depend on each other.

You can take the example of a cow's habitat in terms of what is premium breed and what breed is for milk.

- Identify and name a variety of plants and animals in their habitats, including micro-habitats

What else grows like cucumbers? Melons, pumpkins, courgettes..

What grazes in the fields? Cows, sheep, pigs etc.

- Describe how animals obtain their food from plants and other animals, using the idea of a simple food chain, and identify and name different sources of food.

Humans eat cows and cows eat grass.

- Observe and describe how seeds and bulbs grow into mature plants.

It would be great to grow some mint. You could plant a window full of herbs and place it on the window seal of your classroom.

- Find out and describe how plants need water, light and a suitable temperature to grow and stay healthy.

If you're growing mint the children will fully understand that water is needed from the rain, light from the sun, and the warm of the spring, summer months.

- Find out about and describe the basic needs of animals, including humans, for survival (water, food and air)

See above.

- Describe the importance for humans of exercise, the right amounts of different types of food and hygiene.

See above for notes.

- Find out how the shapes of solid objects made from some materials can be changed by squashing, bending, twisting and strengthening.

This will be highlighted when the yogurt and herbs are being blended. How the ingredients end up smooth.

This will be highlighted by squeezing the cucumber

Try salting the cucumber and leaving for 10 minutes before squeezing... more liquid, is it different?



This could be done through using different shaped ice cubes trays and show the children the water/ice will mould to the shape it is poured into.

Art and design-

- To use a range of material creatively to design and make products.

This will happen in every practical cooking lesson.

- To use drawing, painting and sculpture to develop and share their ideas, experiences and imagination.

Before making the tzatziki you could paint, draw or sculpture what they will look like once decorated. Discussion why they choose the make what they did.

- To develop a wide range of art and design techniques in using colour, pattern, texture, line, shape, form and space.

This will happen in every practical cooking lesson.

- About the work of a range of artist, craft makers and designers, describing the differences and similarities between different practices a disciplines, and making links to their own work.

Don't forget cooking is a culinary art form, the children could look at some cooking books for inspiration, ideas, some of the greats, idols of the cooking world. Get them to look up different recipes for yogurt dips and salads

Design and Technology-

- Design purposeful, functional, appealing products for themselves and other users based on design criteria.

This will happen in every practical cooking lesson.

- Generate, develop, model and communicate their ideas through talking, drawing, templates, mock ups and where appropriate, information and communication technology.

This will happen in every practical cooking lesson.

- Select from and use a range of tools and equipment to perform practical tasks (for example cutting, shaping, joining and finishing)

This will happen in every practical cooking lesson.

- Select from a wide range of material and components, including construction materials, textiles and ingredients, according to their characteristics.

You could make the tzatziki with hard vegetables that need grating, those that like to be blended, and those that can be chopped or put in whole. why?

- Explore and evaluate a range of existing products.

If there is a similar product on the market you could buy it and compare it to what the children have made. Nutritional and cost wise. Tzatziki is widely available to buy, as are other dips

- Evaluate their ideas and products against design criteria.



Ask their opinions on the taste, texture, smell etc. Place in a table or chart and discuss how you could adapt it.

- Build structures, exploring how they can be made stronger, stiffer and more stable.

Cooking and nutrition-

- Use the basic principles of a healthy and varied diet to prepare dishes.

See notes above.

- Understand where food comes from.

See notes above.

- Understand and apply the principles of a healthy diet and varied diet.

Use the eatwell plate to point out the dairy section in compared with the rest of the plate.

- Prepare and cook a variety of predominantly savoury dishes using a range of cooking techniques.

This recipe contains yogurt and vegetables. Contributing to their 5 a day and dairy intake.

- Understand seasonality, and know where and how a variety of ingredients are grown, reared, caught and processed.

See notes above.

- Herb well being

Geography-

- Name and locate the world's seven continents and 5 oceans.

When talking about the mint, you will be talking about Middle East, SE Asia, America

- Understand geographical similarities and differences through studying the human and physical geography of a small area of the United Kingdom, and of a small area in a contrasting non-European country.

You could also talk about what things grow in the same countries and why?

- Identify seasonal and daily weather patterns in the UK and the location of hot and cold areas of the world in relation to the Equator and the north and south poles

See notes above.

- Use physical features, including beach, cliff, forest, hill, mountain, sea, ocean, river, soil, valley, vegetation, season and weather.

Cucumbers grow on the ground, garlic grows underground,, spices grow on bushes/plants, and yogurt is made from milk produced by cows, goats or soybeans.

Mint is a plant and can grow in this country.



- Key human features including city, town, village, factory, farm, house, office, port, harbour and shop.

Try and visit a farm with the children so they can see, smell and hear the difference.

- Physical including climate zones, biomes and vegetation belts, rivers, mountains, volcanoes and earthquakes, and the water cycle.

See notes above.

- Human including types of settlements and land use, economic activity including trade links, and the distribution of natural resources including energy, food, minerals and water.

A good opportunity to talk about the production of food and how that effect the price, air miles, fair trade, sustainability.

History

- Stone and Iron Age, Roman Empire, Anglo-Saxons and scots, Viking, Edward the confessor, local history study, ancient Greece.

*Yogurt was eaten by the Greeks, **you could make the recipe using Greek yogurt.***

Skills the children will be taught through making this recipe.

1. Weighing and measuring using spoons and cups, measuring liquids, (yogurt), using balance and digital scales. All ingredients.
2. Cutting, peeling the cucumber using a peeler and table knife. Grating the cucumber.
3. Mixing.
4. Blending.
5. Tearing or cutting herbs using scissors.
6. Decorating/presenting the tzatziki.

The Recipe

TZATZIKI

Ingredients;

300ml plain or greek yogurt

½ cucumber, peeled and coarsely grated



Salt and pepper

Lemon juice

Dried mint (pukka 3 mint)

Fresh mint, finely chopped

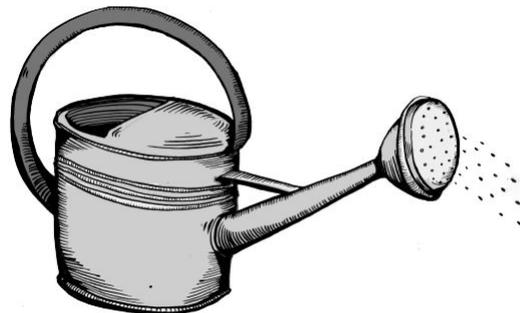
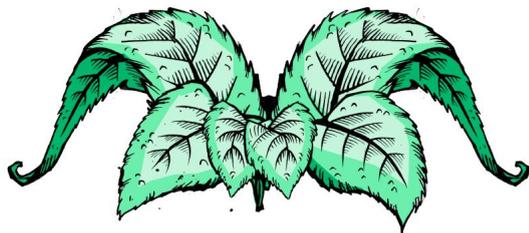
Cumin (optional), ground

Method;

1. Squeeze the cucumber dry in a clean tea towel
2. Mix into the yogurt with the dried mint, lemon juice, pepper and salt to taste

- If you have growing facilities in school. Plant the mint in a window box. Water it and use it in cooking. This will link in nicely with the science curriculum.
- Planting and harvesting will introduce the children to seasonality. Although mint does grow and survive all year round in the UK, but what about cucumbers? Why? Weather conditions?

Mint growing



- When it comes to growing mint it is generally considered to grow best from cuttings.



- You can grow mint from seed and this is quite easy to do but taking cuttings from a good, healthy plant is much more fun and the process is exciting to watch.

Mother plant Instructions

- Buy yourself a mint plant. there are many choices so have a nibble of one of the leaves. You don't have to spend much, prices range from £2 to £4
- The best thing to start from is an already grown mint plant; this will be the mother plant for your home grown mint plants. You can buy one at your local garden centre. Take some time to pick a mint plant that has absolutely no bugs. This is very important, because these will ruin all your new plants. In general we don't have many pests that love mint. There's a new pest on the block which has been in the UK since 2011. It's known as the Blue Mint Beetle.
- Mint plants are generally sold in small plastic pots. Mint needs enough space to grow, so we are going to give our mother plant a new home. Choose a pot that is large enough, say 6 inches or 15cm. Bigger is better so if you have a much bigger pot then use this. You can even take a really big pot that has enough room for your own mint plants that are soon to come. You will have to add some compost.
- There are pots with and without a hole at the bottom. Use a pot with holes in the bottom this allows the excess of water to flow away. In this case, make sure you put the pot on a small plate. Water that has flown away will be absorbed again when the plant needs it.
- Care for your mother plant: give it enough light and water. In the summer months than in the garden is fine.
- Put the plant next to a window or in the garden. Mint can bare lots of sunlight, however some shadow will do too. In fact, mint is a plant that is very mild in the conditions it requires.
- Supply your mother mint plant with enough water: unlike other plants, mint needs a lot of water. Once a day or twice if necessary. Just make sure the soil is always humid. This means when you touch the soil with your finger it's damp and not cold in temperature.
- A dead mint plant probably hasn't received enough water or sunlight. You can recover such a plant by putting it in the sun and by adding enough water. Be gentle however: a dead mint plant cannot absorb as much water as a grown one.



Growing instructions

- Cut off a sprig at around 8cm from your mother plant. Remove the lower leaves and cut the stem just below the leaf node (the point on the stem where leaves emerge) and put it in a glass of fresh water. A clear container works much better than a brown or black pot.
- The sprig you choose doesn't need to have a lot of leaves. Almost every sprig will do. When cutting a sprig, cut about a centimeter above a junction. This way new branches will grow just below that place.
- Do this for a few sprigs so you'll end up with more than one plant. You can put more than one sprig in the same glass.
- Now it's time to wait for the roots to grow. After about a week, small white roots may appear under water. Wait longer, so the roots have a decent length, usually around two/three weeks.
- Pot the stems up in a container with good quality, peat-free multipurpose compost. Being very careful with the new roots. Hold the plant in the pot and carefully place compost around the roots. **REMEMBER NOT TO DAMAGE THE ROOTS.**
- Trim the top growth from the stems as this reduces the surface area from which the plants can lose water. Keep the pot indoors for a week, ensuring the compost stays moist. Once the plants have become established, transplant them into their final growing positions, I suggest you keep the plant in its pot as it can spread at a really fast rate. Ensure the lip of the pot is proud and this helps to stop the mint to spread.
- Treat this plant well (enough water and light) and finally you'll end up with a large plant. You can then take sprigs from this plant to grow other plants.
- When taking sprigs to put in your tea, try taking sprigs with big leaves so smaller leaves get more light. Taking away sprigs from time to time will encourage the plant to keep growing.
- Don't forget to repot your plant each year. If you don't, your plant won't get those big leaves anymore and eventually will die.

Pests and Diseases

- **Rust:** A common fungal disease of many plants that can be recognised by orange, yellow or black spots or blisters that form on leaves, along with pale and distorted stems. Leaves can fall and in severe cases, plants will eventually die. *Remedy: Dig up badly infected plants and dispose of to*



prevent the spores spreading to other plants. Carefully check plants before buying to ensure they are healthy and show no signs of disease.

- Mint beetle: Shiny green beetles and their round black larvae feed on the foliage of mint plants in summer. Large populations can severely damage plants. *Remedy: Their size and colour make both adult beetles and their larvae easy to spot and remove by hand.*

Mint - A background

- Mint is a fascinating plant. Naturally mint thrives near pools of water, lakes, rivers, and cool moist spots in partial shade. In general, mints tolerate a wide range of conditions, and can also be grown in full sun. They are fast-growing, extending their reach along surfaces through a network of runners. A Runner or a rhizome is separated into pieces, each piece may be able to give rise to a new plant. The plant uses the rhizome to store starches, proteins, and other nutrients. These nutrients become useful for the plant when new shoots must be formed or when the plant dies back for the winter. This is a process known as vegetative reproduction and is used by farmers and gardeners to propagate certain plants. Vegetative reproduction is a form of asexual reproduction in plants. It is a process by which new organisms arise without production of seeds or spores. It can occur naturally or be induced by gardeners. In general when it comes to plants mint has to be controlled or it will literally take over! Gardeners will plant out their mint in the soil in plant pots that have the lip of the pot protruding out of the soil. This lip stops the plant from spreading. See it as a barrier.
- Mint is as tasty as it is healthy. The oil from mint is widely used in manufactured products such as toothpaste, shower gel and medicines for its naturally antibacterial and cooling qualities. In cooking, mint sprigs can be added to cooking water or the chopped leaves incorporated into a dish to make the most of this herb's aromatic, flavoursome and digestive abilities.
- Originally taken as a medicinal herb to treat stomach ache and chest pains, it is to this day the most called upon herb for soothing a great deal of ailments from indigestion to heartburn and the common cold to bad breath. History tells us that at one time cloves,, cardamoms and anise were popular breath fresheners. Dentists didn't exist so bad teeth were masked with breath freshening plant seeds. It wasn't until the Victorians that mint started to



become more popular and with the invention of chewing gum in the late 19th century. Mint can provide a cooling sensation to the skin helping to treat minor burns and skin irritations due to its anti-inflammatory properties and it can ease and unblock the breathing and respiratory passages as well as relieve headaches. Known to have originated in Asia and the Mediterranean region, mint has been known for its many benefits throughout history. Greeks used to clean their banqueting tables with the herb and added it to their baths to stimulate their bodies, whilst Romans used it in sauces, as an aid to digestion and as a mouth freshener. Medieval monks drew on the herb for its culinary and medicinal properties. In many cultures, mint symbolised hospitality and was offered as a sign of welcome and friendship to guests.

- Mint derives its name from the ancient Greek mythical character Minthe. According to Greek myth, Minthe was a river nymph. Hades, the God of the Underworld, fell in love with Minthe and when Persephone, Hades's wife, found out, she turned Minthe into a plant, so that everyone would walk all over her and crush her. Unable to undo the spell, Hades gave Minthe a magnificent aroma so that he could smell her and be near her when people trod on her.
- The US produces 70% of the World's peppermint and spearmint. In the US around 70000 acres of mint! An acre (0.4 ha) of mint produces about 76 pounds (34.5 kg) of oil. Now that's a lot of mint!

Mint - Its place in the plant kingdom

- Mint is classified to be a member of the Lamiaceae (mint family). It includes many other aromatic herbs, including most of the more common cooking herbs, such as basil, rosemary, sage, oregano, and catnip. It is estimated that 13 to 18 species exist found all around the world, Lamiaceae is a plant family that can be identified by the stems which are frequently square in cross section, but this is not found in all members of the family. Mints are supposed to make good companion plants, repelling insects and attracting beneficial ones. They are susceptible to whitefly and aphids which can be a problem but with good husbandry and biological control their numbers can be kept low. All mints thrive near pools of water, lakes, rivers, and cool moist spots in partial shade. In general, mints tolerate a wide range of conditions, and can also be grown in full sun. Mint grows all year round but in the UK the growth in the winter is greatly reduced.



- Some mints can be propagated by seed, but growth from seed can be an unreliable method for raising mint for two reasons: mint seeds are highly variable — one might not end up with what one supposed was planted and some mint varieties are sterile. It is more effective to take and plant cuttings from the runners of healthy mints.

