Chives

Allium schoenoprasum

Height: 12 inches

Spread: 18 inches

Sunlight:

Hardiness Zone: 2

Other Names: Flowering Onion

Description:

Edible and ornamental, this selection is great for kitchen and herb gardens, containers and window boxes; clusters of tall grass like foliage with pale purple flowers are delicious and zesty; a lovely addition to salads, sauces, or dried for seasonings

Edible Qualities

Chives is a perennial herb that is commonly grown for its edible qualities. The entire above-ground parts of the plant are edible, and can be harvested at any time in the season. The edible parts have a zesty taste and a pleasant fragrance.

The plant is most often used in the following ways:

- Fresh Eating
- Eating When Cooked/Prepared
- Cooking
- Baking
- Drying

Features & Attributes

Chives has masses of beautiful balls of lightly-scented lavender flowers at the ends of the stems from late spring to early summer, which are most effective when planted in groupings. Its grassy leaves remain green in color throughout the season. The green fruits are held in abundance in spectacular clusters from mid spring to late summer.



Chives flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Chives in bloom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

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This is an open herbaceous perennial herb with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its relatively fine texture sets it apart from other garden plants with less refined foliage. This is a high maintenance plant that will require regular care and upkeep, and should only be pruned after flowering to avoid removing any of the current season's flowers. It is a good choice for attracting butterflies to your yard, but is not particularly attractive to deer who tend to leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Invasive
- Self-Seeding



Chives
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Aside from its primary use as an edible, Chives is sutiable for the following landscape applications;

- Border Edging
- General Garden Use
- Herb Gardens
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Chives will grow to be about 12 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 18 inches. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 5 years. As an herbaceous perennial, this plant will usually die back to the crown each winter, and will regrow from the base each spring. Be careful not to disturb the crown in late winter when it may not be readily seen!

This plant is typically grown in a designated herb garden. It does best in full sun to partial shade. It does best in average to evenly moist conditions, but will not tolerate standing water. It is not particular as to soil type or pH, and is able to handle environmental salt. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. This species is not originally from North America. It can be propagated by division.

Chives is a good choice for the edible garden, but it is also well-suited for use in outdoor pots and containers. It is often used as a 'filler' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination, providing a mass of flowers against which the larger thriller plants stand out. Note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.