

Hoosier Botanicals™

FRENCH TARRAGON (*Artemisia dracunculoides*)

In the Kitchen...

French tarragon, as suggested by its name, is essential to French cuisine. It is one of the French *finest herbes* (along with parsley, chervil and chives), which are used as a base for many sauces, sautés and soups. Be careful when using tarragon as it can overpower a dish with its distinct and dominating flavor. When adding it to soups and stews, wait until the final 15 minutes of cooking to avoid bringing out its bitterness.

French tarragon complements fish, poultry, game, leeks, potatoes, artichokes, mushrooms, asparagus, peas, broccoli, garlic, citrus and rice. It's popular in flavored vinegars, herbed butters and mayonnaise, cream sauces and any dairy products.

Steamed Mussels with Tarragon Cream Sauce Place in large pot: 5 pounds washed and debearded mussels, ½ cup white wine, ½ cup fresh parsley and chervil, 2 cloves minced garlic. Cover and heat for 10 minutes. Remove the mussels and keep warm. Strain the remaining liquid into a sauce pan and boil until reduced to 1 cup. Reduce heat to low and whisk in: 2 tbsp butter, 2 tsp fresh tarragon, 1 cup cream, salt and pepper to taste. Heat but don't boil. Pour over mussels. Serves 4.



Part used: Leaves

Condition: Fresh or frozen

Ethnic span: French and European cooking

Method: Chopped leaves

Storage: Freeze sprigs whole or pack in white vinegar; can be dried

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In the Garden...

Despite its Siberian origins, French tarragon is now considered a popular European herb. French tarragon is a perennial and will spread with its vigorous root habit, so transplant it in a place you'd like it to stay for a while. It will survive the winter if mulched heavily; or you can bring it in as a potted plant when it turns cold. Place it at a south window as it needs plenty of light. Take divisions.

French tarragon likes sandy soil with low acidity and good drainage. Prepare your soil by mixing in a bucket of sand and some lime to the first few inches.

Begin harvesting your French tarragon eight weeks after transplant. Its leaves bruise easily so handle with care as you harvest. Freeze whatever you don't use immediately or store packed in white vinegar. Pinch off any flowers which may appear.

www.hort.purdue.edu/newcrop/6pac



Sunflower family—
Compositae

Caspian and Siberian
origins

Perennial

Full sun best, toler-
ates partial shade

Rich, sandy, well-
drained loams with
pH of 6.9 are ideal

Do not over-water

Grows to height of 2'

Space 2' apart

Usually non-flowering

Propagate by cuttings
or divisions