

Your Garden To Table Seed Company

Pinching Basil to Promote Lush Plants & Long Harvests

Everyone loves basil (we carry 13 varieties) for its wonderful flavor and fragrance. Each season we look forward to growing an abundance of basil in our trial garden to use in everyday cooking, delicious fresh pesto sauce and aromatic herbal vinegars for salads and deglazing sautés.

Basil grows quickly and easily from seed sown directly into well prepared garden beds – but only if it is planted after both day and night temperatures have risen above 50°F (10°C). Seedlings thrive in warm summer temperatures planted in full sun in soil that has been well amended with plenty of compost or other good organic material.

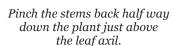
To keep plants productive for the longest period of time, it is important to start harvesting by pinching the stems back to encourage branching growth and discourage plants from flowering. Once basil plants initiate flowering, it is nearly impossible to stop the process and the leaves of flowering plants are smaller and less flavorful.



These basil plants are the perfect size for initial harvesting and shaping. Pinching the central stem of each plant back by half encourages branching and abundant leafy growth

Basil plants initially grow one central stem. Once they are reach 6-8 inches tall, pinch the central stem back by half and about ½ inch above the leaf axils. This will force the plants to branch and grow more leaves. As the plants keep sending out new branching stems, continue to pinch them back in the same manner.







Leave no more than ¼ inch of stem above the leaf axil after pinching.



Fish emulsion is an inexpensive and effective high nitrogen fertilizer that organic gardeners rely on. Apply at the dilution rate on the label.

Along with pinching the plant's stems, it is important to give your actively growing basil plants supplemental feeding with a high nitrogen fertilizer like fish emulsion every few weeks. Nitrogen promotes vegetative growth and will help to grow abundant large, flavorful leaves and helps inhibit flowering.

Here are a few good basil recipes from Renee's cookbooks: Basil Vinegar Chicken Green Bean Pate with Basil Pickled Basil Beans Herbal Jellies