

## **Dill – A Herbal Treat**

For the past few weeks, I've been able to "smell" the dill in the air as it is being harvested. Dill, *Anethum graveolens*, is originally from Eastern Europe. It is commercially grown here, as are several other herbs, during the cooler months of the year. In a backyard garden, one can leave some of the dill plants to flower out and set seed. Seeds will scatter in the wind and you will have dill plant itself for many years to come! In my demonstration garden, we mow it like grass, as I have let it go to seed on numerous occasions and often take the lovely, lacey yellow flowers inside to enjoy in a vase.

Dill is versatile. The seeds, stems, leaves and flowers are all edible. Dill is commercially grown here, as are several other herbs, during the cooler months of the year. Dill requires full sunshine in the garden or field. The leaves of this zesty herb are commonly used to make dip and salad dressing or, to top off a baked fish during the last few minutes of cooking. You can also add dill leaves to pasta vegetable dishes. Dill is also a historically important medicinal herb.

Dill contains volatile oils that are believed to calm an upset stomach, reduce flatulence, ease heart burn and soothe colic. Dill also contains calcium and iron, which is often deficient in diets around the world. Vitamin C, folate, and magnesium and potassium, which help control blood pressure, are also important elements of dill.

Most people only consume herbs in small amounts, so the amount of nutrients you gain from these small servings of herbs is minimal. You can use one full bunch of dill when making a dip with low-fat sour cream (or plain yogurt) and some onion powder, or chopped fresh onion. If we get into the habit of using fresh herbs in all of our cooking and reduce the amount of salt we use, we will be healthier and our bodies will learn to enjoy the taste as well as the benefits of fresh herbs.

We will have a variety of fresh herbs at the Grow'n Growers Farmers Market today, so stop by for your farm fresh produce today, from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m., at Firemen's Park, corner of First Street and Bus. 83 in McAllen. Like us on Facebook at Grow'n Growers for the latest news.

Small Farm Growers will be interested in our Hi-tunnel Vegetable and Lo-tunnel Strawberry Production workshop on Thursday, February 21 at Texas A & M Citrus Center in Weslaco. Cost is only \$20.00, including lunch. Pre-register at (956) 383-1026 next week Tuesday and Wednesday. We are closed Monday.

Barbara Storz is an Extension horticulturist with Texas A & M AgriLife Extension Service and can be reached at their Edinburg office at (956) 383-1026, or by e-mail at [b-storz@tamu.edu](mailto:b-storz@tamu.edu).