



# The Garden Post

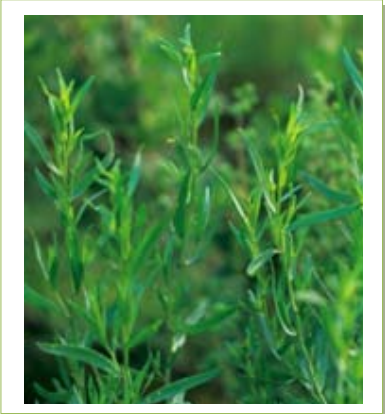


Richmond Hill  
Garden & Horticultural  
Society

Beautifying Richmond Hill since 1914

**March 2011**

## FRENCH TARRAGON



French tarragon is grown for its distinctively mint-anise flavoured leaves which are an essential component of French cuisine and the herb mixture “fine herbes”.

The leaves, preferably fresh, are widely used as flavouring for salads, steak, fish, vinegars, herb butter and in particular, chicken.

Tarragon is also an ingredient in some perfumes and liqueurs and was used to relieve toothache. Chew on a leaf and you will feel a numbness in your tongue.

This herb is an aromatic, clump-forming shrubby perennial with upright, branched stems and lance-shaped smooth, dark to mid-green leaves 3-5 cm long. The nondescript flowers are sterile, thus no viable seed is produced. The clump can reach a height of 90 cm with a 45 cm spread, but for the sake of appearance and better flavour, it is advisable to trim off about a third of the growth several times during the summer. It likes rich sandy well drained loam with a PH of 6.9 in full or partial shade. The plant dies back during the winter and should be protected in this region with a covering of evergreen branches or bark mulch. In spring, it needs to be cut back to ground level and, trimmed for shape but does not need to be divided like many other perennials.

If you want to include this wonderful herb in your garden, you must buy plants or beg (or pinch) some cuttings about 15 cm long. They should be taken in late spring when the new soft leaves have become fairly firm, in about two months there should be a good root system, ready for planting in the garden. Propagation can also be accomplished by root division in early spring or fall. If you see a packet of seeds labelled Tarragon don't buy them if you want flavour. These will be Russian Tarragon which has little or no taste and few other attributes.

Article: Susanne Stark

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### NEXT MEETING

#### William and Marjorie Barker Lecture

Tuesday, April 5, 2011

Lecture Title: *Get Growing*

Speaker: Frank Ferragine (*Frankie Flowers*)

#### Canada Blooms Bus Trip

Wednesday, March 16

Tickets available at the March 1 Meeting from Gary Burke or David Biensch. The bus will depart Elgin Barrow Arena at 9:30 am on March 16. Parking passes will be distributed by Gary Burke on March 16.

#### Greater Toronto Bulb Society

Meeting: March 27, 2011

Time: 1:30pm – 3:30 pm

Location: Cumer Park Community Centre,  
6000 Leslie Street

#### Successful Gardening Show

March 31 – April 3

International Centre

6900 Airport Road, Mississauga

### YEARBOOKS WILL BE DISTRIBUTED AT THE MARCH 1 GENERAL MEETING

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