

Common Name: **Fennel**

Genus: *Foeniculum*

Species: *vulgare*

Family: Apiaceae

AKA: Fenkel, Sweet Fennel, Wild Fennel



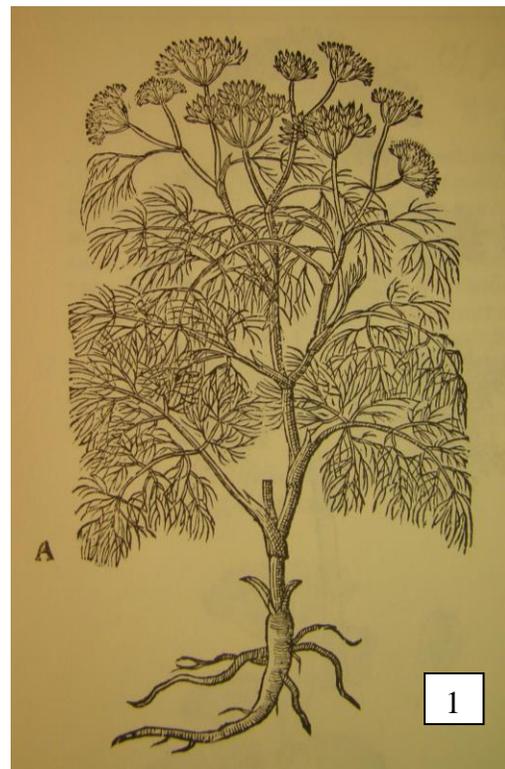
Historical Uses:

Medical: “Fennill, ye herb itself if eaten is of force to draw down milk, as doth the seed being drank, or sodden together with Ptissana. But ye decoction of the hair being drank is good for ye nephriticall, & for ye griefs about ye bladder being diureticall. It is fitting also for ye serpent-bitten when drank with wine, & it expells ye menstrua, & in fevers doth assuage ye burning heat & nauseousness of ye stomach, being drank with cold water...” (1)

“...The greene leaves of Fennell eaten, or the feed drunken made into a Ptisan, do fill womens breasts with milke. The decoction of Fennell drunke easeth the paines of the kidnies, causeth one to avoid the stone, and provoketh urine. The roots are as effectuall, and not onely good for the intents aforesaid, but against the dropsie also, being boyled in wine and drunken...” (2)

“ One good old fashion is not left off, viz to boil fennel with fish: for it consumes that phlegmatic humour which fish most plentifully afford and annoy the body with, though few that use it know wherefore they do it... Fennel is good to break wind, to provoke urine, and ease the paines of the stone, and helps to break it. The leaves or seed, boiled in barley-water, and drank, are good for nurses, to increase their milk, and make it more wholesome for the child. The leaves, or rather the seeds, boiled in water, stays the hiccough, and takes away the loathings, which oftentimes happen to the stomachs of sick and feverish persons, and allays the heat thereof...” (3)

“The *fenuculus* plant, which is fennel [is used] for coughs and shortness of breath, and for bladder pain.” (4)



Culinary: “Many were the uses of fennel. The seeds flavored sweets, sauces for fish, sausages, and soups. For a ‘cold brewit [broth]...take pulp of almonds, dry it in a cloth and when it is dried put it in a vessel; add thereto salt, sugar, and white powder of ginger and juice of fennel with wine.’ Fennel seed boiled in new wine then dried gave the final touch to a dish of choke-pears in *The Goodman of Paris*. Cooked with parsley and beet greens the leaves made a good ‘porray’; raw, they were an important ingredient in a green salad. Mediaeval herbalists state that fennel seed ‘comforteth the stomach.’ ‘Also, if it be drunken with wine, it will break the dropsy, and all manner swelling.’” (5)

Folklore/Astrology: “...I suppose the reason of its benefit this way is, because it is an herb of *Mercury*, and under *Virgo*, and therefore bears antipathy to *Pisces*...” (6)

Contemporary Uses:

Parts Used: Leaves, stems, roots, seeds, oil

Medicinal: “On account of its aromatic and carminative properties, Fennel fruit is chiefly used *medicinally* with purgatives to allay their tendency to griping and for this purpose forms one of the ingredients of the well-known compound Liquorice Powder. Fennel water has properties similar to those of anise and dill water: mixed with sodium bicarbonate and syrup, these waters constitute the domestic ‘Gripe Water,’ used to correct the flatulence of infants. Volatile oil of Fennel has these properties in concentration...Syrup prepared from Fennel juice was formerly given for chronic coughs...It is one of the plants which is said to be disliked by fleas, and powdered Fennel has the effect of driving away fleas from kennels and stables. The plant gives off ozone most readily.” (7)



Note the fine, leafy foliage and the bunch stems at the base.

“ A sweet, aromatic, diuretic herb that relieves digestive problems, increases milk flow, relaxes spasms, and reduces inflammations.” “Used internally for indigestion, gas, colic, and insufficient lactation (seeds), urinary disorders (root). Externally as a mouthwash or gargle for gum disease and sore throat. Plant oil can be diluted with vegetable oil as a rub for bronchial congestion; also added to laxative preparations to prevent griping and to “gripe water” for babies. Not given to pregnant women.” (8)

Culinary: “In Italy and France, the tender leaves are often used for garnishes and to add flavor to salads, and are also added, finely chopped, to sauces served with puddings.

Roman bakers are said to put the herb under their loaves in the oven to make the bread taste agreeably...” (9)

Economic Uses: “Fennel oil is used as a flavoring in the food industry, and in liqueurs, toothpastes, soap, air fresheners, and perfumes.” (10)

Area of Origin: South Europe

Physical description: Tall, clump-forming biennial or perennial with deep roots, erect, hollow stems, and glossy, pinnate leaves, to 12” long, divided into thread-like leaflets.

Plant type: Biennial/perennial

Form: Tall, clump-forming

Height: 6’

Flower color: Yellow

Flowering period: May-September

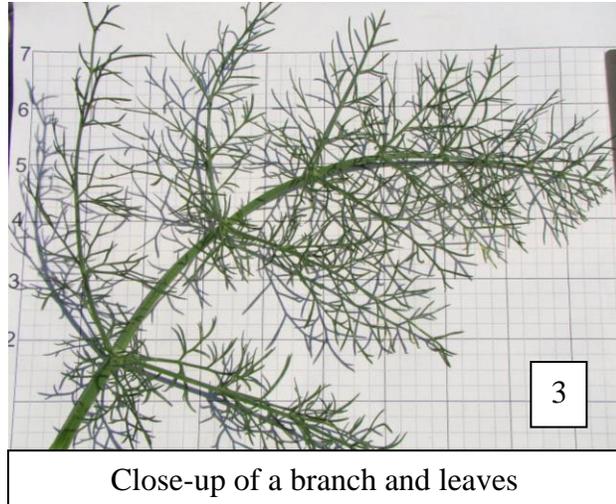
Soil type/requirements: Light, well-drained, neutral to alkaline soil

Fruit: Ovoid, gray-brown seeds

Hardiness zone: “*Foeniculum vulgare* is not reliably hardy in areas with cold, wet winters...” (11)

Sun requirements: Full sun

Propagation: By seed sown in spring; by division in early spring.



Sources

1. Dioscorides, p. 314
2. Gerard, p. 1032
3. Culpepper, p. 59
4. Van Arsdall, p. 132
5. Freeman, p. 8
6. Culpepper, p. 59
7. Grieve, p. 293-297
8. Bown, p. 215
9. Grieve, p. 293-297
10. Bown, p. 215
11. Ibid

Illustrations/Images:

1. Gerard’s Herbal 1633 ed.
2. PSUMG 2014
3. PSUMG 2014