

WORMWOOD, FRINGED



Artemisia frigida

Family: Compositae

Names: silver sage, mountain sage, prairie sagewort, estafiata, sierra salvia, wormwood-sage, Berg Salbei, Fringed Sagewort, Fringed Wormwood, Mugwort, Prairie Sagebrush, Silver Sage, Romerillo Del Llano, fringed sagebrush, arctic sagebrush

Description: The plant has a strong odor after it rains that smells like turpentine or camphor. Fringed sagebrush is a low, mat-forming shrub. It gets to be 4 to 16 inches in height and rarely grows taller than 24 inches (60 cm). Soft stems grow from a woody base. It has many little leaves that grow from the stem and are finely cut. The leaves have a gray or silvery look to them. Flowers are yellow and very small.

Fringed sagebrush has a unique root system. It adapts to the conditions that it finds itself living in. It grows deep taproots where the water level is low, and lots of surface roots when the water is easy to get at. The adaptable root systems allows fringed sagebrush to survive drought periods which commonly occur in the Great Plains and the Mongolian steppe.

Cultivation: Requires a sunny position and a well-drained soil that is not too rich. Requires a lime-free soil. Established plants are very drought tolerant. Plants are longer lived, more hardy and more aromatic when they are grown in a poor dry soil. Members of this genus are rarely if ever troubled by browsing deer. Surface sow seed from late winter to early summer in a greenhouse in a very free-draining soil, but make sure that the compost does not dry out. The seed usually germinates within 1 - 2 weeks in a warm greenhouse. When large enough to handle, prick the seedlings out into individual pots and grow them on in the greenhouse for their first winter. Plant them out in late spring or early summer. Cuttings of half-ripe wood, July/August in a frame. Division in spring or autumn.

Properties: Antiperiodic, Antispasmodic; Disinfectant; Poultice; Stimulant; Stomachic; Vermifuge;

Medicinal Uses: First introduced as a substitute for quinine. Used to combat indigestion by chewing leaves. The leaves are used in the treatment of women's complaints. The plant contains camphor, which is stimulant and antispasmodic. An infusion of the leaves is used in the treatment of biliousness, indigestion, coughs and colds while the leaves are chewed and the juice swallowed to treat

heartburn. A poultice of the chewed leaves is used as a poultice to reduce swellings and the leaves are also placed in the nose to stop nosebleeds. A hot poultice of the leaves has been used to treat toothache. The leaves can be used as a sanitary towel to help reduce skin irritation. They are also drunk as a tea when the woman is menstruating or to treat irregular menstruation. The dried leaves are burnt in a room as a disinfectant. A decoction of the root is used as a stimulant and tonic.

Toxicity: toxic to horses

Culinary Uses: The leaves are used by the Hopi Indians as a flavoring for sweet corn

Other Uses: Both the growing and the dried plant can be used as an insect repellent. The leaves can be placed on a camp fire to repel mosquitoes. The aromatic leaves have been used in pillows etc as a deodorant. Bunches of the soft leaves have been used as towels, toilet paper etc. A green dye is obtained from the leaves.

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