

HORSEMINT, NETTLE LEAF



Agastache urticifolia

[ah-gas-TAH-kee ur-tik-ih-FOH-lee-uh]

Family: Labiatae

Names: Giant Hyssop, Nettleleaf Giant Hyssop

Description: *Agastache urticifolia*, nettle-leaf giant hyssop, is an erect perennial that grows from 2'-4' high and has coarsely toothed, alternating, opposite pairs of leaves to 3" long. There is a good deal of variation in size of leaves and flowers. Dense flowerheads may overall be white, pink, or purplish; to 1" thick and 4" long. Each long, thin 'trumpet' flower, which is about 3/4" long, has a notched upper lip and a 3-lobed lower one, 5 narrow sepals, often tinged with pink, and protruding stamens.

Not drought tolerant. It is in flower in August, and the seeds ripen in September. The flowers are hermaphrodite and are pollinated by bees. The plant is self-fertile. Its distribution ranges from Colorado and Montana to California and Oregon in North America, and in Southern British Columbia where it is listed as an endangered species on the "RED LIST".

Cultivation: Prefers a warm sunny sheltered position and a well-drained soil. Succeeds in most soils. It tolerates temperatures down to between 14 and 23°F. This species withstands temperatures down to about -20°F when fully dormant. Propagate by seed sown in spring in a greenhouse and only just cover the seed. The seed usually germinates in 1 - 3 months at 55°F. Prick out the seedlings into individual pots when they are large enough to handle and grow them on in the greenhouse for their first year. Plant out in late spring or early summer. Division in spring. Fairly simple, if large divisions are used it is possible to plant them straight out into their permanent positions. Basal cuttings of young shoots in spring. Harvest the young shoots when they are about 10 - 15cm tall and pot them up in a lightly shaded position in a greenhouse. They should root within 3 weeks and can be planted out in the summer or following spring.

Properties: Analgesic; Antirheumatic; Stomachic.

Medicinal Uses: A decoction of the leaves is taken internally in the treatment of rheumatism, measles, stomach pains and colds. Externally, a poultice of the mashed leaves is applied to swellings.

Culinary Uses: The leaves are used as an aromatic flavoring in salads and cooked foods. The seed is eaten raw or cooked. The dried flowers and leaves are used to make an herbal tea.

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