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Angelica — A Vintage Ornamental

The angelica plant, known by names such as Michael the Archangel, Masterwort, and the Holy Ghost, is an aromatic medicinal herb commonly found in meadows, marshes and other damp areas. It's most easily recognized by its large, foamy-domed flowerheads, and this biennial can grow over 8 ft tall.

There are over 90 species of angelica, mostly native to the colder regions of Scandinavia, Russia, Greenland and Iceland, with a few species native to North America. It belongs to the umbellifer or Apiaceae family and is related to carrots, Queen Anne's lace and parsley. Most varieties have a tall, structural appearance, with greenish-purple

stems and serrated, slightly feathery leaves.

Garden angelica, the most common variety, is widely used in cooking and traditional medicine. It's a popular ingredient in traditional English dessert recipes and is often used to garnish cakes and sweets.

Almost every part of the plant is edible, and many describe angelica's aroma as a blend of sweet vintage perfume and carrot. This bold yet delicate flavor can be overshadowed when paired with too many ingredients. Try pairing it with orange, ginger, tarragon, chervil, mint and dill instead of dark or milk chocolate.

Stems are the most intensely flavored part of the plant. Once peeled, the young stalks

can be used like celery. Tender stems can also be boiled, then cut into pieces and candied for use in cookies and cakes. For the best yield, harvest the stalks in their second year or early in the third year, before the plant goes to seed. Today, candied angelica stems can cost between \$24 and \$30 per lb.

Angelica's foamy blossoms can be eaten as a vegetable or dessert. Likewise, the roots are a popular choice for infusing herbal liqueurs.

The plant's smaller, more tender leaves are edible, though they can be bitter. They can be chopped into salads or used as a coating for fish. Alternatively, blanch the leaves in water with a pinch of baking soda, shock them in ice water, then dip each in sugar syrup and roll them in crystallized sugar. The result is an aromatic garnish perfect for desserts and drinks.

The seeds, which serve as a fennel substitute, offer a subtle licorice flavor. Pick the seeds from the flower heads and dry them in a dehydrator. They'll last for years in an airtight container.

Angelica is easy to find in ditches along the roadside. While these spots might be contaminated by road runoff, they could indicate larger colonies nearby. However, angelica closely resembles highly toxic

plants such as water hemlock and hogweed. A safer option for human consumption is to grow your own.

Angelica plants have long taproots, making them difficult to transplant or grow in pots. It's best to direct-seed in the fall or cold-stratify in the fridge for 4 to 6 weeks before planting indoors.

Space the plants 1 to 3 ft apart, and thin out patches to ensure they receive plenty of air and light. Taller varieties may need staking to stay upright. They'll add height and interest to the back of garden beds, especially in mixed plantings.

The plants grow best in full sun but can tolerate light shade. Plant seedlings where they'll receive light afternoon shade to prevent leaf scorch and help retain soil moisture longer, and water them enough so the soil never dries out completely.

Most angelicas are biennials that flower only in their second year, then go to seed and die. Leave the flowers in place in the fall to allow the plants to reseed naturally, or collect the seed by hand. As long as you don't deadhead spent blooms, you should enjoy a plentiful display of angelica for many growing seasons to come.

A Closer Look At Salvia: Big Family, Big Benefits

Salvia is a brilliant garden multitasker offering striking blooms that appeal to gardeners and pollinators alike. Many varieties are renowned for their medicinal and culinary uses. Best of all, salvia is beginner-friendly. The plant needs plenty of sun and well-draining soil, but otherwise thrives when left alone.

Salvia encompasses a large family of ornamental plants found worldwide. Sage remains one of the most popular options because of its prolific ability to fill herb gardens with pollinator-friendly flowers.

Sage tends to be vigorous, fast-growing, and able to withstand extreme heat and cold without issue. The brightly colored blooms also make excellent additions to floral displays.

The Salvia family is a good choice for gardens with deer and rabbit problems because its resinous, aromatic foliage deters browsing animals.

While salvia is a perennial in most climates, it can also be grown as an annual or overwintered indoors. Full sun is best, though afternoon shade can help in hot climates.

Container gardening suits this family well, especially in areas with limited sunlight. Use well-draining, sandy or loamy soil with a slightly acidic to neutral pH. Container-grown salvia is also easy to bring indoors when frost risk is high.

Timing matters when planting sage. Aim for mild weather in the spring or fall to give plants the best shot at success. Outdoor sowing works best after the last spring frost date. Alternatively, start seedlings indoors six to eight weeks early. These tiny seeds can be sprinkled directly on the soil surface. No need to add much on top. The plants will scale up quickly, so give them at least 18 in. of spacing. Despite this vigorous growth, these hardy plants rarely (if ever) require staking.

Fertilizer needs for this family are minimal. A spring application of compost will sustain most plants throughout the year. Likewise, most salvia varieties are low-water plants once established. It's best to water at the base to avoid wetting the leaves.

Pests tend to leave salvia alone, but be on the lookout for slugs, spittlebugs and

spider mites. Young plants can benefit from a repellent spray during the first few months. The leaves become more bitter over time.

When well-cultivated, salvia offers blooms for long periods with minimal maintenance. Sage especially benefits from regular pruning to stay robust. Remove old, woody stems to encourage new growth — especially for plants you plan to grow as perennials. Even with this care, sage plants tend to become too woody after 5 years and are best replaced.

Regular trimming helps maintain the plant's shape and bushiness. Consider leaving frost-killed foliage on salvia plants over the winter, as it provides habitat for many beneficial insects. When spring arrives, you can cut plants down to about an inch.

Stem cuttings from existing plants can be an efficient, cost-effective replacement strategy. Just take a 4 to 6-in. section from young, non-woody stems, remove the lower leaves, dip the end in rooting hormone, and plant in moist, soilless potting mix.

Medicinally, the Salvia family is known for its antioxidant and antimicrobial properties.



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Some varieties show evidence of enhancing cognitive function and easing menopausal symptoms. Most are non-toxic, though a few (*Salvia divinorum*, "purple sage") have psychoactive properties and should be handled with caution.

Rare Dog Breed Captures Hearts Worldwide

With a worldwide population of about 600, the otterhound has a legacy that far exceeds its numbers. This European hunting breed has a loyal following, especially among The Otterhound Club of America.

"Otterhounds are considered a vulnerable breed," says Robert Burnett, director of The Otterhound Club of America. "It's a shame because they make wonderful companion animals. Many of us have more than one. Their scarcity means many people aren't aware of what wonderful, versatile dogs they are."

These large, rough-coated dogs have oversized heads and strong bodies, along with slightly webbed feet that make them well-suited for water. They tend to shuffle when walking, are amiable and even-tempered, and have an average lifespan of 10 to 13 years.

"The term 'otter-hounds' was given to any dog that could keep the scent of an otter and dates as far back as Queen Elizabeth I," says club member Karmen Lange. "In the United Kingdom, fish were an easy, plentiful and nutritious source of food for a large majority of the population for centuries, and otters agreed. Otters could deplete a small pond's entire fish stock in a day, and smart,

water-loving pack dogs seemed the answer."

The breed still has plenty of appeal today.

"The qualities that make Otterhounds great otter hunters are the same ones that make them special," says member Eibhlín Glennon. "They have great noses that enable them to follow a specific scent over land and water, and the persistence to do it for miles."

Today, Otterhounds use their keen sense of smell to track and trail specific human scents, making them well-suited for AKC Tracking and Search-and-Rescue training.

"Curiosity is another of the breed's special characteristics," Glennon says. "To capture an otter, hounds need the ability to problem solve independently. They don't depend on humans to satisfy their curiosity or tell them what to do."

Likewise, the otterhound's pack background means they're social with people and other animals.

"Their fuzzy cuteness makes them excellent picks for therapy dogs and visitors to schools and nursing homes," Glennon says. "Otterhounds are real people magnets."

Burnett has a specific owner in mind for Otterhounds.

"Someone with a good sense of humor.

These animals are smart and can be stubborn, but are also playful and gentle."

Because they're scent hounds, he recommends a fenced yard and keeping them on a lead.

Overall care needs are minimal.

"This breed requires coat maintenance," says Katie Wright. "It's not as extensive as other dogs, but a good brush out or comb out every week or two will decrease the risk of matting."

She cautions owners to monitor their puppies' exercise levels to support healthy bone growth.

"Though their outward appearance and goofy personalities make some people hesitant, the Otterhound is extremely versatile. We've seen Otterhounds compete in Barn Hunt, agility, scent work, tracking, dock diving and more. They also work as therapy dogs."

Thanks to their size and social nature, Otterhounds require plenty of exercise and thrive with training.

"Classes using positive reinforcement are best," says Glennon. "They don't thrive on long stretches of repetition, so some trainers will not be happy with this breed. People



Otterhounds have excellent noses that enable them to follow a specific scent across land and water.

who like a challenge will find their match, though."

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