

# THE IMPORTANCE AN USAGE OF THE *AGASTACHE* *FOENICULUM* SPECIES (Pursh) Kuntze

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**Abstract:** *Agastache foeniculum* (Pursh) Kuntze is an Indian traditional herb, native from North America, initially used for its medical virtues against heart disease, in the treatment of cold, in combating fever by stimulating perspiration. Primarily used to treat digestive problems, *Agastache* also has antiseptic properties. It is recommended in combating gastroenteritis and vomiting. Combined with other herbs it is used in the cure of headaches, anxiety and nausea. Its use helps the circulatory system or urinary tract and digestion. Externally, it is used to cure bruises, injuries, burns and infections.

Later on it has been used in culinary and ornamental purposes.

## Introduction

### **The *Agastache foeniculum*'s use:**

*Agastache* is a traditional Indian herb, native from North America, that was used for its medical benefits as well as in many meals (Fig. 1).

### **Medical use:**

Its leaves are used in combating heart disease and have diaphoretic effects. An infusion of leaves is used in the treatment of colds, fever, heart failure.

If left to cool the infusion is used in chest pain treatments (such as when the lungs are dry because of excessive coughing). A poultice of leaves and stems can be used to treat burns. *Agastache* is used as an infusion in Indian pharmacy in order to combat fever as it stimulates sweating. Its main use is in case of respiratory disorders – colds, flu, bronchitis, upper respiratory tract problems. It contains the bitter component, Marubiin, which has expectorant properties. It was also used in cases of slow digestion, congestions of the intestinal mucus and tract infections. Externally, it is beneficial to bruises, injuries and infections.

Primarily used in the treatment of digestive problems, *Agastache*, also has antiseptic properties. The leaves and stems have therapeutic benefits: it is used in heart disease, heart weakness, also having diaphoretic effects.

Plant properties: sedatives, antispasmodics, expectorants, anti – inflammatories, cardiac problems, sudorific, angina and poultice.

It is recommended to combat gastroenteritis and vomiting. *Agastache* is also used in combination with other plants in the treatment of headaches, anxiety, nausea, but it also helps the digestive circulatory system or the urinary tract. Generally it is prepared in the form of tablets.



Fig. 1. Appearance of flowering *A. foeniculum*

### Ornamental use

In the past years, lots of varieties of *Agastache* have been created, which are very decorative, such as *var. Aureum*, yellow – green leaved, resistant to low winter temperatures. *Hyssop* (*Hyssopus officinalis*), related with the *Anise Hyssop/Agastache*, has aromatic leaves, slightly bitter with a minty taste and usually beautiful dark blue flowers, but it sometimes can be pink or white, which makes of it a beautiful ornamental plant.

The narrow sharp leaves can be used as a substitute for sage and can also be added in decorative bouquets. It is also used as distilled in the production of perfumes and liquours. *Agastache* gives the garden a real aesthetic attraction: its` beautiful blue flowers satisfy all demands (Fig. 2).

It is a very important element in the garden and in wildflower areas. One can place a bowl of *Agastache* on verandas and terraces, where its scent can be felt and appreciated. The flowers are well kept in the form of dry bouquets.



Fig. 2. *A. foeniculum* , gives the garden a real aesthetic attraction

### **Culinary usage**

The aerial parts of the plant are cool and energizing. The *Anise hyssop* (*Agastache*) is usually amongst the favourites in tasting trials. Its leaves and flowers are of use either fresh as flavourings, or in cooking, for certain dishes.

Fresh it has a sweet fennel flavour and it's preferred as an additive to acid fruits. It is recommended to be consumed in small quantities, for it inspires a feeling of dryness of the mouth (Fig. 3).

Plant lovers say it is a culinary herb, the spicy flowers being used in salads, but books specialized in wildflower, characterize it as a wild plant from the north – central part of North America. Bees are attracted to the flowers, as well as the producers of medical herbs, the flowers maintaining their flavour and colour even after being collected. The plant is highly aromatic with a sweet licorice taste of mint. Its leaves and flowers can be used fresh or dried for garnishing. The leaves have a pleasant scent of mint, and can also be used fresh or dried to flavour cakes, bread or chicken. The leaves and flowers can be used in cakes and drinks. *Anise hyssop* is a plant whose silver green leaves release a sweet scent of anise. Its` flowers can be added to fruit salads for their spicy aroma. The leaves can be used to flavour pork and other meat dishes. Fresh or dried leaves can be used to make a refreshing tea.

*Hyssop*, for those who love the flavour of anise, can be used in different deserts: ice cream, or it can be used as decoration on cakes. It can be added in syrup, as its flavour goes well with fish.

It can also be used as a sweetener (instead of sugar) to tea or other foods. In cuisine it can replace anise. Leaves and flowers – raw or cooked, are used as flavourings in raw or cooked meals. Of the leaves a pleasant tasting tea can be made.

It is used to flavour jams, puddings, sauces, for its leaves taste like anason, with a licorice flavour. It is also used as a spicy and aromatic herb for vegetables.

The leaves are used in the kitchen as infusions instead of anise. Its` flowers beautifully garnishing various dishes. The spicy, piper aroma of the hyssop goes best with liquid foods, such as potatoe or beans soup. It is used as an aromatic herb in the North American and Asian cuisines. In order to keep the leaves during winter, these can be dried at shade. The aromatic leaves can be used to make jellies. Seeds are added to cakes and muffins. Crushed leaves can be rubbed on the skin in order to repel mosquitos.

In the results of the systematic research of the Moldavian indigenous flora, 163 oil containing species can be identified. Currently a number of species are included in the production of beverages: *Cephalophlora aromatica*, *Agastache foeniculum*.



Fig. 3. The aerial parts of the plant *A. foeniculum*

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