



Presenting July's Plant Ally:

Anise Hyssop

Common names: Anise Hyssop, Blue Giant Hyssop, Fragrant Giant Hyssop, Hummingbird Mint, Licorice Mint, Elk Mint

Botanical name: *Agastache foeniculum*

Family: Lamiaceae

Energetics: Cool-warm

Taste: Sweet, aromatic, a little pungent

Parts Used: Aerial parts: flowers, leaves, stem

Major constituents: Mainly volatile oils of: methyl chavicol, Trans- anethole, myrcene, limonene, estragole, 1-octen-3-ol, 3-octanone, β -eudesmol, spathulenol, bicyclogermacrene, germacrene D, E- caryophyllene & methylchavicol

Actions/Functions: Aromatic, diaphoretic, dispersive, relaxing yet uplifting nervine, a little demulcent

*I will always remember the first time I tasted **Anise Hyssop**... it was in the kitchen of Farmacy Herbs in Providence, RI. I believe it was one of my very first times in the kitchen there, & I was tasked with processing the Anise Hyssop from the garden. I recall putting it in the food processor to chop it up & being completely blown away by the scent that arose from the bowl once I opened the lid. I tried some in tea not long after & ever since, I have found myself *craving* it. The flavor falls somewhere between licorice-anise-fennel-mint & it is just so so lovely. From then on, it was almost as if I opened Pandora's Box, because I could not shake the flavor & feeling of this beautiful plant. Now that I think on it, Anise Hyssop has shown up at some major, life-altering points in time for me. I won't go too far down memory lane, but after my first experience at Farmacy, I came to encounter it at*

other very special points in my life. For instance, I found some volunteer Anise lining the little, wooded pathway which led to the yurt I lived in while attending midwifery school. Most recently, I had another volunteer plant unexpectedly sprout up in a tiny garden bed in my backyard where the Herb Cottage will be! This sweet, mysterious friend seems to be around me whenever I enter into new, wonderful phases in my own personal life. On that note, dear reader, is there a new, wonderful, possibly challenging phase of your life which you have just entered? Perhaps that is why this has shown up in your in-box today of all days, perhaps it is a little nudge to use some yourself...

As a member of the Mint family, Anise Hyssop grows much the same way as many other mints do: square stems, opposite leaves, & lovely spike-inflorescences. This plant is native to the US, specifically the Great Plains area, where it was much used by American Indians of that region, namely (though not limited to) the Cree, Cheyenne, & Chippewa who considered it a culinary, medicinal, & spiritual herb. Besides the humans who have been drawn to this plant's qualities, Anise Hyssop has always brought pollinators to its blooms—bees, butterflies, hummingbirds & other insects seem to love this plant. The same goes for rabbits & birds, especially goldfinches who return time & again for the seeds.

The botanical name *Agastache* comes from the Greek *agan* + *stáchys* translating to 'an ear of grain' which refers to the shape of the inflorescence. *Foeniculum* is Latin for 'fennel' which gives a nod to the flavor of the seeds & leaves. European colonizers gave it the common name we call it today, Anise Hyssop, because the flavor resembled anise & due to its visual similarities with hyssop. On that note: though Hyssop & Anise Hyssop are both in the Mint family, they otherwise do not have much in common.

Though this plant does not have a terrible amount of historically recorded use, what is known is that it was widely used amongst American Indian tribes & in American folk medicine. Typically for its ability to ease cough & colds, dispel fevers, to quell diarrhea, & topically for soothing wounds & poison ivy rashes. I also read that the

Chippewa made tea with it to relieve the chest pain caused from coughing & the “dispirited heart.” Additionally, it seems to have been worn, burned as incense, or planted around a home for its protective & healing properties.

Other than its incredible power to invoke memory, I personally have found Anise Hyssop to be useful as a gentle, soothing, inspiring nervine. It has really helped me to get out of some little slumps when added into my daily regimen. It definitely has an affinity for the lungs & respiratory system: a place we hold grief, where its dispersive nature can act as a soft, sweet breeze to lighten our sorrow. It is also great as a digestive aid, especially for children—its carminative qualities dispersing stagnation, trapped air, & soothing indigestion. Plus its sweet flavor, as with all naturally sweet things, points to its incredible ability to *build & nourish*. So it would be useful in formulas where there is depletion, tension, weakness, over-exertion, when you are on the mend from being sick, or in cases where there needs to be some overall grounding & strengthening. Similarly to Licorice (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*), I love to think of this plant as a great harmonizer for body, mind, & spirit.

My favorite way to prepare Anise Hyssop is in the form of a strong tisane. You must try it on its own, because the soft flavor will have you hooked. You can also make a fresh tincture (it is divine), & its flavor goes extremely well with sweet preparations such as infused-honeys (delicious), electuaries, oxymels, syrups, & whatever else your heart desires. Externally, use it in smoke-bundles, washes, poultices, compresses, dream pillows, sachets, or as a liniment. One day I am going to have to make a liniment of Anise Hyssop to use on poison ivy rashes!



An Anise Hyssop Recipe Ritual ::::::::::

for bringing some gentle openness to the heart, for stirring the sweetness of memory, & for feeling at harmony on your path

you'll need:

A Full Moon

1/2 cup (8g) fresh Anise Hyssop leaves & / or flowers or 1/4 cup (4g) dried

1 cup (170g) pitted & chopped peaches (@1-2peaches)

1/4 cup (60ml) vodka

3 TBSP. raw honey

1 bottle (750 ml or 3 1/4 cups) dry rosé or verde wine

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On a Full Moon, combine the Anise Hyssop, Peaches, & honey in a quart (1L) jar

Pour the vodka & wine into the jar making sure the peaches & the anise hyssop are fully submerged

Gently stir & recite this spell as many times as you see fit, *“heart open, stirring sweet, memory open, harmony at my feet”*

Cover the jar tightly, label it, & refrigerate for 2-4 weeks, shaking it when you remember to (you can also recite the spell as you shake your potion)

Remember: the longer you let it sit & infuse for, the stronger the flavor will be!

Strain the mixture through a fine mesh strainer

Discard the solids, bottle & refrigerate for up to 1 month / serve chilled & enjoy amongst dear friends

— adapted from a recipe in Wild Drinks & Cocktails by Emily Han

Oh, & last but not least : a recipe for Anise Hyssop Gumdrops! (I couldn't leave this out)

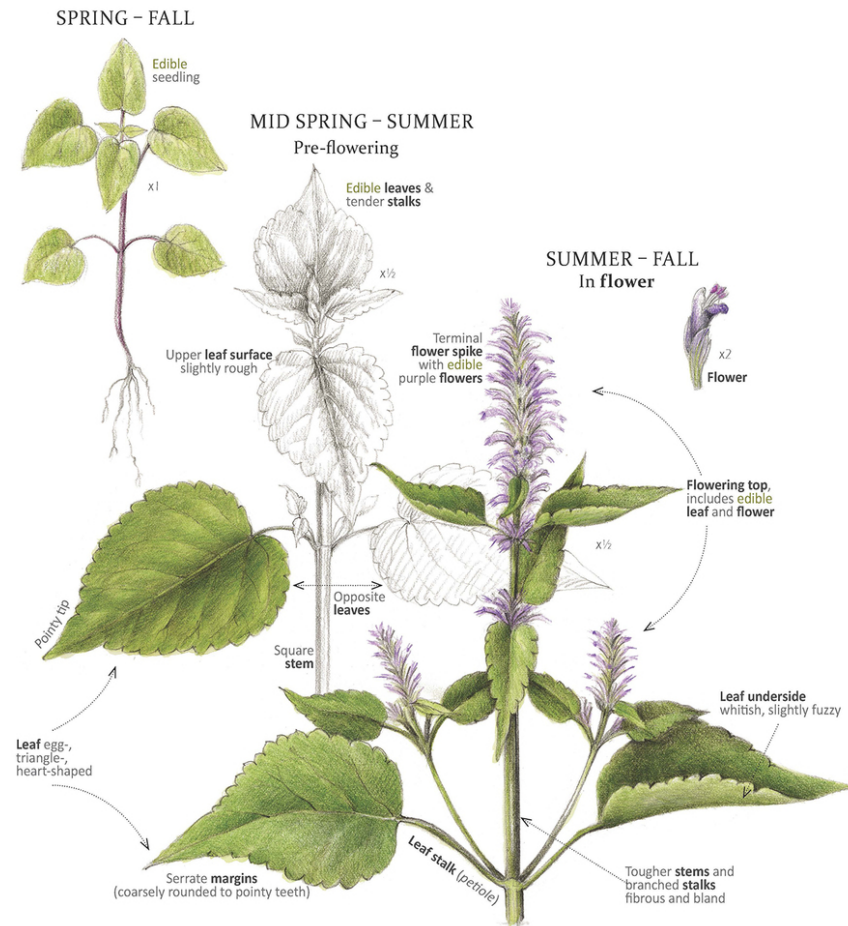
<https://homespunseasonalliving.com/anise-hyssop-gumdrops/>

Lovingly yours /

Chanelle + Agastache

ANISE HYSSOP

Agastache foeniculum Lamiaceae



HABITAT

Light: Full sun to part shade

Soil: Sandy, well-drained loam to rich

Hardiness Zones (USDA): 3–8

Found: Prairies, gardens, woodland openings & edges

LIFE CYCLE Perennial

REPRODUCES BY Seed, root

SIZE 2–4' tall by 1–2' wide

CULINARY USES

Leaf: Raw in beverage, salad; cooked in beverage, dessert, soup, fish topping; use like fennel fronds as flavor accent.

Flower: Raw in beverage, butter, dessert, salad; cooked in beverage, dessert; as flavorful garnish on most dishes.

Qualities — Aromatic, sweet, anise/fennel-like flavor with leafy green, mint tones. Essential oil highest as plant begins to flower; milder before and after flower.

Selected Recipes — p. 77, p. 81, p. 83, p. 90, p. 92, p. 151, p. 180, p. 197, p. 201

Drawing from: Foraging & Feasting: A Field Guide and Wild Food Cookbook by Dina Falconi & illustrated by Wendy Hollender. Published by Botanical Arts Press. Learn more about the book & how to purchase [here](#)