

LEMON GRASS 香茅草

93-8-1

(Cymbopogon citratus)(Other Names: Herva chaha, Khaw (India),
Sereh Makan (Malaya))

Lemon grass is perennial and looks like a tall grass with sharp leaves. They are widely used in the Orient, particularly in Vietnam, Thailand, India, Burma, and Malaya. The plant produces many stalks during the hot summer growing season.

HOW TO GROW: Lemon grass is a type of grass which is very easy to grow. It can be grown in a pot or in the garden. In mild climates, where temperatures are above 40°F, it can be grown in the garden. In cold areas, it should be grown in pots. It is best to grow lemon grass in a container 6-8 inches deep and 6-8 inches in diameter. Choose a pot with a hole at the bottom for easy drainage. Use a general soil mixture (equal parts of peat moss, perlite and potting soil). Cut off the roots with about half of the stalk and replant it.



CARE: During the summer growing season, lemon grass produces new plants quickly as the adult ones are used. In cold areas, during the winter, move the pots to the indoors and place in a sunny location. In the garden, lawn fertilizer can be used 2-3 times per year. Fertilize with house plant fertilizer such as Miracle-Gro.

HARVEST: Use as a vegetable. Harvest when stalk is young and tender. When it is old it is more fibrous. For storage they can be dried.

USES: The lower part of the stem is used for cooking. It has the aroma and flavor of lemons. Lemon grass can be used for soups, curries, salad, and fish. Use only the bottom 6 inches of the stem. The upper grassy part may be cut and crushed to make a tea. To use dried lemon grass, soak it in hot water about 1 hour before it is needed. In preparing the fresh form, cut off a 6 inch stalk. Any dry looking outer layers should be peeled away until fresh stalk appears. With a sharp knife, slice the cross section of the stalk so that a very fine, edible mass is produced for sprinkling on salads and fish dishes. In addition, lemon grass is used as a source of aromatic oils used in scents.

RECIPES: (Modified from Hartmann's Plantation)

1. Hot and Sour Lemon Grass Shrimp Soup

Ingredients:

- 1 lb Shrimp. Shelled and deveined.
- 4 Lemon grass, cut into 2 inch pieces, crushed.
- 2 - 6 Small red fresh chillies, seeded and thinly sliced.
- 1/4-1/3 cup Fresh lime
- 1/2 tsp Salt
- 2 tblsp Nam pla (fish sauce)
- 2 Makrut leaves
- 1 cup Straw mushrooms
- 5 cups Water
- 1 tsp Chinese parsley, coarsely chopped

Procedure:

1. Put lemon grass pieces into a pot of water and boil until the pieces turn yellow. Add the ingredients except shrimp and stir about 5 minutes. Then add shrimp. Cook 2-3 minutes or until shrimp turns pink. Do not overcook.
2. Pour soup into individual bowls and garnish with Chinese Parsley. For variation, substitute squid or fish for shrimp.

2. Lemon Grass Chicken Soup in Coconut Milk

Ingredients:

- 3 Large Chicken Breasts, deboned and cut into bite size pieces.
- 2-4 Small red fresh chillies, seeded and thinly sliced.
- 4 Lemon grass, cut into 2 inch pieces, crushed.
- 1/4-1/3 cup Fresh lime juice (according to taste)
- 1/2 tsp Salt
- 2 tblsp Nam pla (fish sauce)
- 1 tblsp Kha, thinly sliced
- 2 Makrut leaves
- 3 cups Coconut milk mixed with 2 cups of water.
- 1 tblsp Chinese parsley, coarsely chopped.

Procedure:

1. Mix water and coconut milk in a large pot, add lemon grass pieces.
2. Bring to a boil and add remaining ingredients. Cook about 12 minutes over medium heat or until chicken pieces are tender.
3. Pour soup into individual bowls and garnish with Chinese parsley.
*For variation, substitute thinly sliced beef or fish for the chicken.