

## PARSLEY



Although the pretty, curly green Parsley (*Petroselinum Sativum*) will grow anywhere with a temperate climate, it is a native of Greece, and the Greeks very early on recognised it as a medicinal herb. The inclusion of the word 'sativum' in its botanical name tells us that it has been a culinary herb for a very long time, too.

The essential oil is obtained from the leaves and, occasionally, the roots, but mainly from the seeds, which are far richer in oil than any other part of the plant. The principal constituent is apiol, sometimes called Parsley Camphor. The oil is very thick, and varies from colourless to greeny-yellow, with an aroma very close to that of fresh parsley. It is a febrifuge and a mild stimulant and has a tonic effect on the smooth muscles, particularly those of the reproductive system. As a uterine tonic it is sometimes used as an aid to labour.

Among Frenchmen it has the reputation of increasing their sexual prowess - unfortunately we do not know whether or not this is justified! It is also tonic in its effect on the blood vessels and is sometimes used externally in the treatment of piles (haemorrhoids). Applied to bruises it helps to shrink the broken blood-vessels

immediately below the skin, and so reduce the amount of blood seeping into the surrounding tissues.

But the principal use of Parsley is as a diuretic, and in the treatment of urinary tract problems and in particular, kidney and bladder stones.