

SAVORY HERB GARDEN ADDITIONS

Lois Sutton

The Herb Society of America, South Texas Unit

Winter and summer savory are good additions to the late spring garden. They are culinary herbs, providing an oregano-like flavor. Like all herbs give them good drainage and a minimum of six sun-hours.

Winter savory (*Satureja montana*) is a perennial. It looks a bit like thyme: low growing; small dark-green leathery leaves; woody stems. Winter savory's advantage over thyme is that it is more tolerant of summer heat and rains. Its flavor is more pungent than summer savory. In my garden, plant height is consistently about 12" and none have bloomed. Harvest by tip pinching or taking short cuttings. Consistent harvesting does encourage lateral stem development and a bushier plant, but changes in plant shape seem rather minimal. Buy a plant or take cuttings from a friend. Like other herbal perennials it could be planted at any time but avoid the middle of Houston's summer. Set it out on days you like to work in the garden!

Summer savory (*S. hortensis*) is an annual. It is a short plant, like winter savory, but with soft stems and lighter green leaves. It may gift you with small insignificant blooms but I celebrate any herbal blooms! Flowers, leaves and soft stems are all edible. Harvesting frequently will keep this plant a bit more 'organized' looking - it grows quickly and even though it is a short plant, it looks leggy. Summer savory may be grown from seed. Sow with only a light soil cover as the seeds require light for germination. Or buy a plant or two - set them out in the garden in late spring or early summer. In my garden this plant is more susceptible to those hot, hot summer days when we get a lot of rain. I haven't found that providing additional drainage helps - it's a soft-stemmed plant that takes up a lot of water. When I've been able to find plants, I have replanted in late-September for the fall/early winter growing season.

Savory, the 2015 Herb of the Year, will be featured at our April 25th Herb Day presented by The Herb Society of America, South Texas Unit." 9am-2pm, Fondren Hall, St. Paul's Methodist Church, 5501 Main St. at Bissonnett. \$45 (box lunch). Registration deadline: April 15. Details: www.herbsociety-stu.org.