

MINT FAMILY ALBUM



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LABIATAE OR LAMIACEAE

Making Thyme for Family

Can you imagine your kitchen or boudoir without the mint family? From rosemary to thyme, lavender, and patchouli, the mints reign supreme as a source of flavoring and essential oils. The fragrant volatile oils in mints are stored in fragile, bulbous glands on the surface of the leaves and stems. Just brushing against the plant may release its distinctive odor.

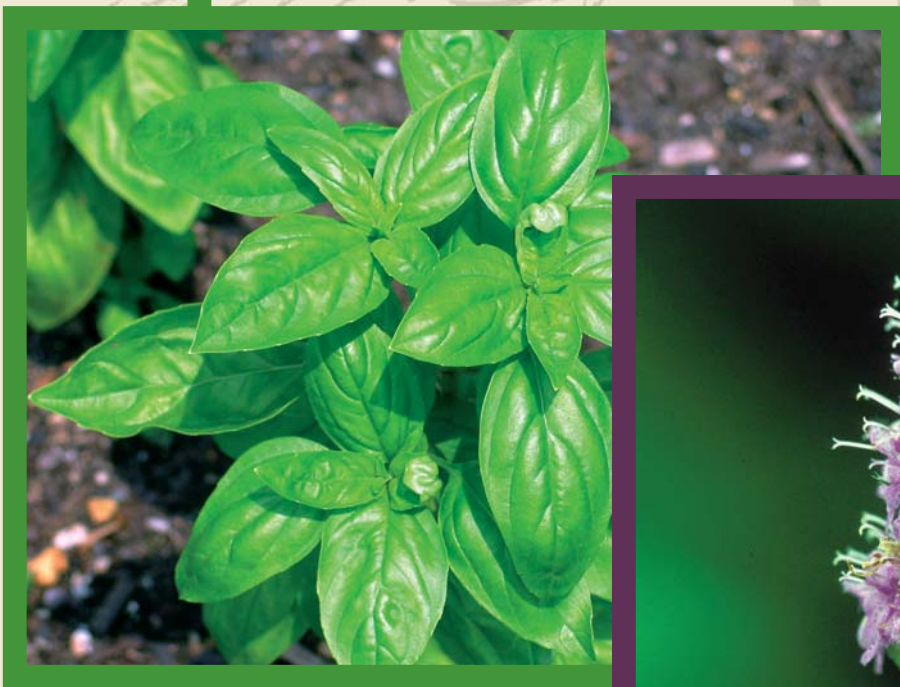
But the common garden coleus reminds us that not all members of the mint family are fragrant. A better clue to identifying mints is

that virtually all have a square stem; feel the stem of a mint plant and notice how it has four sides.

The original family name Labiatae takes its name from the shape of the flowers: the five petals are arranged in an upper and lower “lip” (*labium* in Latin), reminiscent of the shape of an orchid flower. The flowers accommodate a wide variety of insect pollinators that rest on the lower lip while they feed.



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