



'Chocolate Mint'
Mentha x piperita
 (MEN-thuh pip-er-EE-tuh)

Left: Little Metalmark larva on 'Chocolate Mint'
Center: A moat of living deer repellent (April)
Right: The foliage (April)
 Photo by and grown by John Brandauer



Description: Extremely fragrant, a naturally occurring hybrid of spearmint (*Mentha spicata*) and watermint (*Mentha aquatica*). The oil is extracted from the leaves, in the morning before the sun reduces the oil content. It is the source for peppermint oil, used as a flavoring and medicinally. The Romans and Ancient Egyptians used it! The chocolate may refer to the color, or may be an association, with the scent, and candy with peppermint and chocolate as ingredients. We use this as a living moat, with a rhizome barrier, to ward off the cloven hoofed demons that come out at night. It is the only plant scent deterrent that has ever worked for us.

Other Names: Peppermint, mint, Black peppermint

Type: Herb

Family: Lamiaceae (Mint Family)

Life Cycle: Perennial

Native Status: Europe. Documented in the wild in 45 states of the US.

Light Requirements: Full sun, thrives in part sun, best blooms and scent in full sun.

Soil Preference: Prefers moist, well-drained soil.

Care: No special care needed. Cut back to encourage leaf growth, fertilizing may encourage growth, with reduced scent and flavor.

Growth Rate: **Vigorous, rapid**, use a rhizome barrier, grow in a container, or live a life filled with regret, the choice is yours.

Foliage: Very aromatic, bronze green.

Blooms: Violet/Lavender, in late summer, the bloom is not the primary reason to plant this.

Size: One to two and half feet tall, **as wide as you allow it!**

Wildlife Benefits: The inflorescencing blooms, with their abundant nectar are attractive to bees and butterflies. Possibly a caterpillar host.

Propagation Methods: Rhizome division, clump division. Rarely seeds, seed not true. Several cultivars exist, Orange, Lime, variegated...

Commercial availability: **UPDATE 1 MAY 2010 Available locally**, Asprocolas Acres offers fine plants, inexpensively at the Millstone Farm Market. Mail order would be my distant second choice.

Information compiled from the web, supplemented by our experiences.

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