

# *Origanum vulgare*



**Family:** Lamiaceae

**Local/common names:**  
Oregano, Jakhmbuti, Bantulsi

**Trade name:** Oregano

**Profile:**

Oregano is one of the most widely used spices in European cuisine and is widely cultivated for its use in cooking. It belongs to the family of other important herbs like marjoram, mint and savory. The plant is a native of the Mediterranean region though some varieties are natives of west asia.

**Habitat and ecology:** This herb is found in the temperate Indian Himalayas from Kashmir to Sikkim between 1,500-3,600 m. It is widely found in the districts of Chamba, Kinnaur and Lahaul and Spiti in Himachal Pradesh and in Uttarakhand. The plant naturally grows in dry, grassy areas. It is found commonly in scrubs, meadows and near cultivated beds of agricultural fields. The species grows better on calcareous soil.

**Morphology:** The plant is a branched, perennial herb growing up to a maximum height of 1 m. The leaves are broadly ovate, entire or rarely toothed margins. The flowers are in terminal, corymbose cymes and white pink or purple in colour. The nuts are brown and smooth. The plant possesses aromatic thyme like flavour.

**Distinguishing features:** It is a perennial herb with ovate leaves and pale white flowers. The plant smells like thyme.

**Life cycle:** The life cycle of this plant is from June-December

**Uses:** The plant is aromatic and has a slightly bitter taste. Oil produced from the plant has several medicinal uses. Oregano is high in antioxidant activity due to a high content of phenolic acids and flavonoids. The plant is an antiseptic, antispasmodic, carminative, cholagogue, diaphoretic, emmenagogue, expectorant, odontalgic, stimulant, stomachic and tonic. It is given as a stimulant and tonic in diarrhea and colic. It is applied in chronic rheumatism, toothache and earache. It is also used in cough and bronchitis. In homoepathy, it is used for hysteric conditions. The paste of the leaves is applied in cases of fire burns, eczematous skin, boils, cuts and wounds. Oregano has a long history of culinary use and is often cultivated in modern gardens as a culinary herb. The leaves and tops, cut prior to blooming are used to flavour foods. The plant is used as a potherb and is also used as a vegetable in Lahaul. The plant has several other uses as well. It is used in dyes and parasite repellants. The oil from the plant is used in baths. It stimulates the growth of hair and has been extensively used in the cosmetic and soap industry. Oregano has demonstrated antimicrobial activity against food-borne pathogens such as *Listeria monocytogenes*.

**Market rate:** Data not available