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Mint

Common name: Apple Mint, Curly Mint, Pennyroyal, Peppermint, Pineapple Mint, Spearmint, Water or Bog Mint, hortela, menta, mentha montana, menthe, nane.

Botanical name: Mentha spp.: *Mentha aquatica*, *M. piperita*, *M. pulegium*, *M. spicata*, *M. suaveolens*.

Family: The Labiatae (Lamiaceae) are mostly herbs or shrubs comprising about 200 genera and 3,200 species. The family is classified in eight groups based on highly technical characters. Most of the economically important species are used for their essential oils and bitter principles. Lavender, pachouli, rosemary, sage, spearmint, peppermint, basil, thyme, marjoram, savory, oregano, pennyroyal, catnip, bee balm, horehound, yerba buena, hyssop and others are important as herbs or spices or in perfumery, medicine or other minor applications.

Origin: The 25 to 30 species of Mentha are native or naturalized to north temperate regions, Australia and South Africa. They may have originated from the Mediterranean.

Description: Mints are branching herbs or shrubs. Many are perennials with leafy runners, stolons or underground rootstocks. Almost all have essential oils and half a dozen species are cultivated. The leaves are opposite or whorled, and are simple or occasionally pinnately compound; stipules are absent. The flowers are bisexual and zygomorphic. The fruit consists of four 1-seeded nutlets that rarely may be fleshy and drupaceous.



Uses: Peppermint oil has long been an extremely popular flavoring agent in products ranging from chewing gum to after-dinner mints. Medicinally, it is mainly used to aid the various processes of digestion although, in 1990, the United States Food and Drug Administration declared peppermint oil to be ineffective as a digestive aid and banned its use as a nonprescription drug for this purpose. The active constituents are found in the essential oil, mainly menthol and carvone.

Allergens: Menthol and L-carvone appear to be the main allergens. Mint also contains 1,8-cineole, acetaldehyde, acetic-acid, alpha-amorphene, alpha-cadinene, alpha-carotene, alpha-copaene, alpha-gurjunene, alpha-pinene, alpha-terpinene, alpha-terpineol, alpha-thujone, alpha-tocopherol, aluminum, amyl-alcohol, amyl-valerate, anethole, azulene, benzoic-acid, beta-betulenol, beta-carotene, beta-caryophyllene, beta-copaene, beta-ionone, beta-pinene, beta-thujone, beta-ylangene, betaine, bicycloelemene, bisabolene, cadinene, calcium, camphene, carvacrol, carveol, carveol-acetate, carvone, caryophyllene-oxide, cedrene, cedrol, choline, chromium, cineole, cinerol, cinnamic-acid-methyl-ester, cis-piperitol, cis-roseoxide, cis-sabinol, citronellol, cryptone, flavons, hymenoxin, iron, isoamyl-phenylacetate, isobutyric-acid, isomenthol, isomenthol-acetate, isomenthone, isomenthyl-acetate, isopulegol-acetate, isorhoifolin, isovaleraldehyde, isovaleric-acid,

isovaleric-acid-n-octyl-ester, jasmone, lavandulol, ledol, limonene, linalool, luteolin, menthol, menthone, menthoside, menthyl-acetate, menthyl-isovalerate, menthyl-valerate, myrcene, myrtenol, neoisomenthol-acetate, neomenthol, neomenthone, neomenthyl-acetate, nerolidol, nevadensin, octan-3-ol, p-cymene, p-cymol, pectin, pent-cis-2-en-1-ol, perillyl-alcohol, phellandrene, phenylethanols, phenyl-propyl-pyridines, phosphorus, pinene, piperitenone, piperitone, piperitone-oxide, pulegone, pyridine, rosmarinic-acid, sabinene, sabinene-acetate, sabinene-hydrate, salvigenin, sideritoflavone, silicon, terpinolene, thymol, trans-piperitol, trans-roseoxide, vanillin, viridiflorol, xanthomicrol

Allergy: [Irritant](#) and [allergic contact dermatitis](#) have both been reported. Dermatitis in two bartenders was attributed to contact with *Mentha citrata* (Bergamot mint).

Menthol, the chief constituent of Oil of Peppermint (*Mentha piperita*), is irritant in high concentration especially if evaporation from the skin is prevented.

Perfumes and colognes containing menthol and/or Oil of Peppermint can produce [dermatitis](#) in some individuals.

Dermatitis has been reported in workers in candy factories whilst adding peppermint to lollies. A finisher of chewing gum with contact dermatitis had positive patch test reactions to diluted spearmint (*Mentha spicata*) flavouring.

The leaf of *Mentha longifolia* is said to be irritant to the skin.

Ingestion of *Mentha satureioides* (Penny royal mint) was suspected as a cause of hepatic photosensitisation in sheep. Essential oils from these plants are noted in many reviews of cosmetic dermatitis as allergenic.

Cross reactions:

Other information:

Patch test: Leaf as is, peppermint oil 2%, Menthol and L-carvone.

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