

Borage

Borago officinalis (Boraginaceae)

Fast Facts: Acres in Washington: less than 20
Number of Growers: less than 50
Per Acre value: \$2500-\$3800

Description Of Crop:

Borage, also known as starflower, is an annual herb. It grows to a height of 2-3 feet and is bristly or hairy all over the stems and leaves. The leaves are oval and 4 to 5 inches long and are a grey-green color. Only the young leaves are palatable. The flowers are blue in color and have five narrow, triangular-pointed petals. Borage is used as either a fresh vegetable or a dried herb. As a fresh vegetable, borage has a cucumber- like taste and is used in salads, as a garnish or cooked like spinach. The flower has a sweet honey-like taste and is used for flavoring in drinks. Borage is high in gamma-linoleic acid (GLA) which can help reduce cholesterol levels and blood pressure. It is also said to have beneficial effects on acne, allergies, fatigue and mood swings.

Borage should be direct seeded in May. It needs room to grow as it is base branching and sends up large leafy shoots. When harvesting, pickers should wear gloves since the hairy leaves and stems may be irritating.

In Washington, borage is grown on very limited acreage for fresh markets, and as a medicinal herb. Many home gardeners keep it as a garden flower.

Key pests:

Weeds are the biggest pest in borage production. These include lambsquarter, kochia, pigweed, thistles, and grasses. Borage is relatively disease and insect free although aphids can be a problem.

Key pesticides:

Growing medicinal herbs generally means the use of organic methods of production. Weeds are controlled with hand hoeing, mulches and landscape fabrics. Few chemicals are cleared for use on medicinal herbs. Aphids can be controlled through beneficial insects or sprayed with a jet stream of water.

Critical pest

Control issues:

Growers should pick disease and pest resistant cultivars when available. Growers should use 4 to 5 year crop rotations. Beneficial insects should be encouraged and over watering should be avoided. Crowding borage may lead to leaf fungus problems.

Expert Contacts: Brad Jaeckel
WSU Organic Farming Project
Johnson Hall Room 201
Pullman, WA 99164-6420
509 335 5893

Location

Of Production: Okanogan and Whitman counties



www.plantcare.com



www.flowersociety.com



Borage

Borage Production in Washington State



