Stop 321 Adult Tour – Lemon Grass, Show House

A native of India and the nearby island of Sri Lanka, lemongrass is commonly thought of today as a pungent herb that can add a lemony bite to any dish. Growing in clumps from four to six feet tall, this member of the grass family blends well with garlic, chilies, and cilantro -- ingredients common to the cuisines of Indonesia and Thailand. This tender perennial is so basic to Thai cooking that many Thai restaurants are named “Lemongrass.”

But for centuries, lemon grass has also been used by Indonesian and Malaysian herbalists and in Ayurvedic medicine. Prepared as a tea it helps to combat depression and bad moods, as well as nervous and digestive disorders. In India, it goes by the name of “fevergrass” because of its use in treating fever and killing germs. And studies show that lemongrass is rich in a substance called, ‘citral,’ the active ingredient in lemon peel, which gives this plant its’ antibacterial and antifungal properties.

Lemon grass is also used as the lemon scent in many products including soaps, perfumes, sachets, and candles. Most of the commercial lemongrass crop for the United States is grown in California and Florida. You'll find this intriguing herb for use in your cooking in many ethnic grocery stores. Why not try your hand at growing some at home? Lemongrass does well here outside in the summer. But since it can't tolerate frost, it needs to be taken inside before the first frost, so you can enjoy Thai cooking all winter long.