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### *Anethum graveolens*

[Synonyms : *Anethum sowa*, *Anisum vulgare*, *Peucedanum anethum*, *Peucedanum anisum*, *Peucedanum graveolens*, *Peucedanum sowa*]

**DILL** (English, German, Norwegian, Swedish) is an annual or biennial. Native to southern Asia, the eastern Mediterranean and southern Russia, it has tiny fragrant, greenish-yellow flowers.

It is also known as *Adas* (Javanese, Malay), *Adas china* (Malay), *Adas manis* (Indonesian, Malay), *Adas pudus* (Malay), *Adas sowa* (Indonesian, Malay), *Aedtill* (Estonian), *Anega* (Spanish), *Aneldo* (Spanish), *Anet*, *Aneth* (French), *Aneth odorant* (French), *Aneto* (Esperanto, Italian, Spanish), *Aneto odoroso* (Italian), *Anithi* (Hindi), *Barrul shibbat* (Arabic), *Bastard fennel*, *Catakuppai* (Tamil), *Celer hlíznatý* (Czech), *Celer bulvový* (Czech), *Celer nat'ový* (Czech), *Celer řapikatý* (Czech), *Chou qian hu* (Chinese), *Dereotu* (Turkish), *Dild* (Danish), *Dille* (Dutch), *Dill seed*, *Dill weed*, *Dilly*, *Diru* (Japanese), *East Indian dill*, *Endaru* (Sinhalese), *Endro* (Portuguese), *Falso anis* (Spanish), *European dill*, *Ezamillo* (Spanish), *False anise*, *False fennel*, *Anega* (Spanish), *Fenouil bâtard* (French), *Fenouil puant* (French), *Funcho* (Brazilian, Portuguese), *Funcho-bastardo* (Portuguese), *Garden dill*, *Guppai* (Tamil), *Gurkenkraut* (German), *Habbat halwah* (Arabic), *Hinojo falso* (Spanish), *Hinojo hediondo* (Spanish), *Indian dill*, *Inondo* (Japanese), *Inondu* (Korean), *Kapor* (Hungarian), *Kattucata kuppai* (Tamil), *Kopar* (Croatian), *Koper* (Slovenian), *Koper ogrodowy* (Polish), *Kôpor* (Slovakian), *Kôpor voňavý* (Slovakian), *Kopr* (Slovakian), *Kopr vonný* (Czech), *Kopur* (Bulgarian), *Krip zapashnii* (Ukrainian), *Madhura* (Sanskrit), *Meeting house seeds*, *Meeting seed*, *Mirodija* (Croatian), *Mishreya* (Sanskrit), *Misroya* (Sanskrit), *Ou zhou shi luo* (Chinese), *Persil des marais* (French), *Phak chee lao* (Thai), *Phak si* (Laotian), *Ryytitilli* (Finnish), *Sabbasigi soppu* (Kannada), *Sabbath Day posy*, *Sabsige* (Kannada, Telugu), *Saddacooppei* (Tamil), *Samin* (Burmese), *Samit* (Armenian), *Sataguppi* (Tamil), *Satahva* (Sanskrit), *Satakuppa* (Malayalam), *Satakuppai* (Tamil), *Satakuppi* (Tamil), *Sata kuppi sompa* (Tamil), *Satapuspa* (Sanskrit), *Satha kuppa* (Malayalam), *Satha-kuppai* (Tamil), *Shamir* (Hebrew), *Shang hui xiang* (Chinese), *Shatapushpamu* (Telugu), *Shepu* (Marathi), *Shibit* (Arabic), *Shibith* (Arabic), *Shih-lo* (Chinese), *Shi luo* (Chinese), *Shiwit* (Persian), *Sólselja* (Icelandic), *Sompa* (Telugu), *Sotapa* (Hindi), *Soup* (Nepalese), *Sowa* (Hindi), *Soya* (Hindi, Urdu), *Stinkende vinke* (Dutch), *Suva* (Gujarati), *Suvani bhaji* (Gujarati), *Sua bathi* (Hindi), *Suwa bhaji* (Hindi), *Thìa là* (Vietnamese), *Thiam khao pluk* (Thai), *Thiam tatakkataen* (Thai), *Thi là* (Vietnamese), *Till* (Estonian), *Tilli* (Finnish), *Tu hui xiang* (Chinese), *Tukhme Shibbat* (Persian), *Ukrop* (Russian), *Vakataraha* (Telugu), *Yampah*, *Yang hui xiang* (Chinese), and *Ye xiao hui* (Chinese).

The fruit can be distributed by flowing water if they fall into it. The seeds are so light that it would take over 25,000 of them to weigh 1 oz.

Warning – persistent handling of the plant can cause dermatitis and increase the skin's sensitivity to sunlight.

*Graveolens* is derived from Latin *gravis* (heavy, weighty) and *oleo* (to emit an odour, smell) components meaning 'strong-smelling or heavily-scented'.

The common name Dill probably comes from a Saxon word *dilla* which means 'to lull'.

Dill has been cultivated since at least 400 BC and both the ancient Egyptians and the ancient Greeks used it as a medicine. The latter put such a high price on dill (literally) that it is said that at that time in Greek society burning dill-scented oil was considered to be the extreme in profligate luxury. According to the Christian *Bible* dill was paid by the Pharisees as one of the tithes in Judaea in the early years AD when Jesus Christ was preaching (Matthew, Chapter 23) although there is debate among authorities as to whether the 'dill' now mentioned in translations should have been referred to as anise (*Pimpinella anisum*).

For the Romans, the plant was a symbol of vitality – and it formed part of a gladiator's diet.

The Romans are believed to have introduced it to the countries they occupied in western Europe (including Britain) from where it was also to make inroads into Scandinavia.

In Europe it was considered to provide protection against witchcraft

Trefoil, vervain, John's wort, dill,  
That hindereth witches of their will .....

as it was included in magicians' spells, and when infused in wine it was also believed to enhance passion. If dill was nailed to a door it would prevent access either way for anyone with malevolent intent.

During the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries in England the seeds came to be known as Meeting house seeds as they were often chewed during long church services. It is only speculation to wonder, as some authorities have, whether this provided physical nourishment or mental comfort during long sermons. In the following Century it also gained a reputation as a believed slimming aid.

Today dill is one of the characteristic ingredients in central European and, more specifically, Scandinavian cookery. (Summer visitors to Stockholm participate in the crayfish festivals at which dill sauce is a must.) In France in addition to sauces the seeds have been used to flavour pastry and cakes – but they are probably best known as an ingredient in pickled cucumbers (*Cucumis sativus*) which are much enjoyed in Germany. In India the seeds are especially valued as a digestive aid and in this capacity are often served either whole or ground at the end of a meal. This last gives some credence to reports that for Charlemagne (747-814) dill was able to quell hiccups brought on by overdrinking and overeating, for which reason he demanded that dill oil be available for his guests at banquets. Coming back to modern times, the drinks industry uses the essential oil on a commercial basis as flavouring in some spirits eg. gin, and also in liqueurs such as anisette.

For today's toiletry industry the essential oil offers an ingredient for scenting soap.

Medicinally, dill has long been used to treat stomach complaints and today is still used in gripe water to ease a baby's colic. The seeds are often included in a salt-free diet because they are rich in mineral salt. In some parts of India dill is also an ingredient in remedies for a wide range of ailments including fever, indigestion, eye disorders, kidney infections, ulcers and uterine problems.