



Growing Stevia A Natural Sweetener



Patty's Plants

Stevia is a natural sweetener which is non-glycemic and non-caloric but is 10 times sweeter than sugar. Just biting into a leaf is like tasting a sugar cube! This plant will grow to about 1-2' high and wide.

To grow Stevia, it must get about 3-4 hours of sunlight per day. Don't over water but keep it somewhat moist, not letting it dry out completely. Stevia has a shallow root system so using mulch or compost helps keep the roots from drying out. Cuttings can be taken which will root fairly easily so you can bring it inside during the winter.

To harvest Stevia, cut off the tips of the branches about a third of the way down. The branches will have new growth at that point which will make it grow fuller.

To use Stevia for sweetening, the flavor must be extracted from the leaves. This requires heat in the form of hot liquids (either water or tea, coffee etc.) to steep for about 5 minutes. The sweetened hot water can be condensed and used to sweeten baked goods, fruit, and desserts of all kinds. One fresh stevia leaf is enough to sweeten a cup of tea or coffee or a glass of lemonade. Or add the leaves to baked beans, barbecue sauce, salad dressings, soups, hot cereal, baked goods and stews.

1 tsp dried crushed Stevia leaves = 1 cup sugar.

Make a Stevia liquid extract by steeping 1/4 cup Stevia leaves in 1 cup hot water for 24 hours. Strain and store in the refrigerator.

*Always contact your doctor before using any herbal remedies concerning your health.

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