

ANOTHER
HERB HERBERT
FACT SHEET

SPECIAL INTEREST HERBS

AZTEC (SWEET) HERB

Phyla dulcis
(Syn. Lippia dulcis)



DESCRIPTION
Fast grower
tender perennial,
native to

Mexico, Central America and Nicaragua. Known by the Aztecs as 'Tzopelic Xlhuitl'. The Spanish call it *hierba dulce*. It is a member of the family Verbenaceae and is a sprawling ground cover that grows to about 1' / 30 cm high with a spread of about 2-3' / 1m wide. The leaves are ovate, incredibly sweet and grow up to 1 1/2" 4cm long. The flowers are white and pea sized. An excellent hanging basket plant.



USES
This herb has been used by the Mexicans since the time of the Aztecs, hence where the common name used today originates from.

The leaves can be eaten from the plant like candy or tossed into fruit salads for an unusual addition. It was used for coughs, colds, bronchitis, asthma and colic. Leaves contain the intensely sweet compound hernandulcin (1000 times sweeter than sugar) but high camphor content make it unsuitable for use as a sugar substitute. In the classic codex of 1552, Martin de la Cruz, an Aztec physician, wrote "The root of the herb called tzopelica-cococ, ground in tepid water is also of value for one with a cough; let him either drink the liquor or gnaw the root". There is a warning on this plant that Sweet Herb is considered a strong emmenagogue and should never be taken by pregnant women.



CULTIVATION
This herb enjoys a well-drained soil in deep shade to filtered sun. While this herb will tolerate full sun, the leaves tend to go a reddish color in too much sun. As they are a tender perennial, they will only tolerate temperatures down to 30oF / approx. 0oC. Phyla likes an average soil, not sandy and not clay. For more information on keeping your Aztec Herb healthy see our organic gardening fact sheet on the Herb Herbert website. Select 'Special Interest' tab and select 'Organic, Gardening' in the pull down menu.



Any enquiries can be directed to:

HERB HERBERT P/L PO Box 24 Monbulk Victoria 3793 Australia

E-mail: herb@herbherbert.com

This Herb description is for informal use only; we cannot accept any liability for any harm or illness arising from the misuse of the plant described above

www.herbherbert.com