

## **A Little Lovage goes a Long Way**

By Sue Hoye, CNN

If you love herbs and like to garden, a good perennial herb is lovage. The French call it céleri bâlard, or false celery. It is a great addition particularly to potato and tomato dishes. Lovage has been used since Greek and Roman times as a seasoning in food, an additive to medicines, even an ingredient in love potions.

It looks and smells something like celery but is much larger, growing more than 6 feet tall, according to Michael Weishan, publisher of Traditional Gardening Magazine and host of National Public Radio's "The Cultivated Gardener," to debut in October.

### **Natural salt substitute**

"One of its principal uses is as a salt substitute in dishes. If you are trying to cut down on salt, it can be used instead in soups or stews," he said.

Lovage can be used in almost any dish celery or parsley would be used in. It isn't as bland as celery, so Weishan cautioned people should be careful of the amounts they use. "A little lovage really goes a long way," he said.

Though there are recipes with lovage, a recipe isn't necessary to use it. Lovage can just be added to dishes. It is great in green salads, potato dishes, soups and stews to give a dish "a little oomph," Weishan said.

He said anything with a carbohydrate base or that is bland is better with a little lovage.

"It is one of my favorite herbs," he said. "It is part of the carrot family and is one of a number of herbs the Emperor Charlemagne mandated must be grown in every garden."

Lovage also has the added health benefit of being high in vitamin C.

Weishan said he discovered the herb when the magazine's food editor served him a dish including lovage, and he has loved it ever since.

An umbellifer, lovage has bright green hand-shaped leaves and ridged hollow stems. The stems come in handy as straws for Bloody Marys.

The plant's seeds are flat, oval and ridged and are commonly called celery seed. In the mid- to late summer, the small, yellow flowers bloom.

**Get your Fresh Lovage at the LC Farms Tent at the Easton Farmers' Market!**