

Florence Fennel — *Foeniculum vulgare* var. *azoricum* (Mill.) Thell.¹

James M. Stephens²

Florence fennel is also known as finocchio, sweet fennel, sweet anise, and fetticus. It is grown successfully in many gardens and a few fields throughout Florida.



Figure 1.

USE AND CULTURE

Fennel has a very aromatic, distinctive anise-like flavor and odor. It is used as a boiled vegetable, and sometimes raw in salads or with other vegetables. Plants grow about 3 feet tall. The dense and thread-like foliage reminds one of dog fennel. Florence fennel appears somewhat similar to celery and it is often confused with dill. From seeding to harvest takes about 4 months. Cool weather is best for growth of fennel.

DESCRIPTION

The plant is an annual that is planted for the thickened bulb-like base of the leaf stems. These make a swollen, oval, 3 or 4 inch wide structure just above the ground. Some gardeners pull soil up around the developing bulbous base to blanch (whiten) it, but this practice is not necessary.

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