

# Discover the Flora of Our Campus

## Tarragon (*Artemisia dracunculus*)

*Artemisia dracunculus* is a perennial spice and medicinal plant belonging to the Asteraceae family, distinguished by its strong aroma. This plant is especially known for its fragrant leaves used in cooking and is widely known as “tarragon.” In nature, it can be found growing wild in some regions, but it is mainly cultivated.

Common tarragon typically grows to a height of 60–120 cm. Its stem is upright, slender, and somewhat branched. The leaves are elongated, thin, smooth-edged, and dark green in color. When crushed, the leaves release a strong aroma



somewhat reminiscent of anise and vanilla. The plant is generally rich in essential oils.

*Artemisia dracunculus* blooms in the summer months. Its flowers are very small and yellowish or greenish-yellow in color. The flowers are arranged in panicle-like clusters and are not very decorative, but they are important for the plant’s reproduction. After flowering, small seeds are formed.

This plant is considered native mainly to Eurasia and naturally occurs in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia, and Siberia. In Azerbaijan, it is widely cultivated, especially in gardens and agriculture. It prefers



sunny locations and grows best in well-drained, light soils. It is relatively drought-tolerant.

From an ecological perspective, tarragon is somewhat beneficial for pollinating insects. Its strong aroma can repel certain pests, so it is also used as a protective plant in gardens. It grows quickly, producing abundant green biomass and playing a role in garden ecosystems.

Humans primarily use *Artemisia dracunculus* as a spice. Its leaves are used fresh or dried to flavor food. It is especially valued for meat dishes, sauces, soups, and pickles. It contains essential oils, flavonoids, and aromatic compounds.

In folk medicine, it has been used to improve digestion, stimulate appetite, and relieve stomach discomfort. In some cases, it is also valued for its calming and antibacterial effects.

One of its interesting features is that tarragon is among the plants with a very strong and distinctive aroma, and even a small amount can significantly change the flavor of food. It holds a special place among “classic culinary herbs” and is widely used particularly in European and Caucasian cuisines.

