

# Florence Fennel—*Foeniculum vulgare* var. *azoricum* (Mill.) Thell.<sup>1</sup>

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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.

## 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.

## 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.



Figure 1. Florence fennel  
Credits: James M. Stephens

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