

Q: I would like to grow Jerusalem Sage. What does it need to thrive?

A: *Phlomis fruticosa* is a member of the Mint family (Lamiaceae). A prolific bloomer in the late spring, whorls of butter yellow and white, two-lipped blossoms appear spaced on the square, upright stems. The relatively large, (5-8") lance-shaped leaves are gray-green, slightly fuzzy to the touch and remain year-round. The blossoms are produced in the late spring, but if you cut back the plants after flowering they may bloom again in the late summer. The blossoms are used fresh and dried in arrangements.

A Mediterranean native, this *Phlomis* likes full sun, excellent drainage, little to no fertilizing and moderate water. If you have cool foggy summers no water will be needed, if you are in one of the inland areas occasional soaking is prescribed. The plants are very drought tolerant once established. Deer and disease resistant, bees and butterflies like the blossoms. *Phlomis fruticosa* is readily available from local nurseries. You might want to do some checking, there are many different varieties of *Phlomis* beginning to appear in the market.

Q: Is it time to plant spinach? (*Spinacia oleracea*)

A: If your garden bed was prepared last fall, now is a good time to plant spinach, lettuce, carrots, beets, chard and a large assortment of flowers from seed. Spinach is a cool season annual, and is best planted when the cool days of spring will allow the leaves to be produced. If planted. If you would like to harvest spinach for a longer time, sow small amount of seed every couple of weeks. This is a fast growing and short-lived plant, ready to pick in about 7 weeks. You can harvest the entire plant or carefully remove just the outer leaves and get a second crop.