Cultivated for its aniseed-flavored leaves, tarragon is an aromatic plant that is very popular in French and Chinese cuisine. A perennial, deciduous plant, tarragon forms a small bush with straight, branched stems. The bright-green leaves are narrow and pointed. Light-green flowers are grouped in loose clusters at the top of the stems. The plant does not produce fertile seeds; reproduction is therefore vegetative: The fibrous roots of the tarragon plant are divided and replanted in small segments between February and March. The harvest takes place in June; a second harvest can be conducted in September. The plants are cut short and then distilled. The plant has a productive lifespan of up to three years and then must be renewed. Tarragon essential oil is herbaceous, with a delicious aniseed character. The Hungary quality has a freshness not found in the France quality, which is earthier.

Called “dragon sagewort,” among other lively names in many languages, tarragon a highly mystical etymology. Its English common name, tarragon, is most likely from the Arabic word tarkhun, meaning “little dragon.” The species name also refers to this symbol: dracunculus in Latin means “little dragon” or “serpent.” Apparently it is the shape of the leaves, resembling a reptilian tongue, that inspired the names. The name of the genus, Artemisia, comes from the name of the Greek goddess Artemis. Tarragon is a native herb of Central and Eastern Europe. It grows in the wild in Russia, China, and North America.