



Catnip (*Nepeta cataria* L.; Family, Lamiaceae) has long been recognized as an aromatic herb, grown as an ornamental, used for medicinal purposes and with a particular property that attracts cats and members of the nondomesticated feline family. While Ernest Guenther wrote about catnip and the distillation of its essential oil in his classic volume of Essential Oils, he also cited that story he heard that dried catnip was hung up in the mountains as bait by hunters to attract wild cougars. While interest in catnip continues to center on the volatile monoterpene iridoid nepetalactones, the compounds responsible for eliciting the reaction in cats, more current interest is now focused on the insect pest repellency by that same compound that has such promise. Yet, the compounds that could be responsible for catnips use as an herbal tea and for treating a number of health conditions and that support the traditional medicinal applications have not been examined and is the focus of the research paper we feature in this edition of JMAP. This photo features the Rutgers developed catnip cultivar CR9 field-grown prior to harvest for essential oil and/or drying. Photo by Greg Trabka, Ball Horticulture Company.