



Growing, Harvesting, Preserving and
Cooking with Herbs
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Disclaimer

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Definition of an Herb

Several definitions

- **Botanical Definition:** a herbaceous plant that lacks a woody stem and dies to the ground each winter
- **Herb Gardener Definition:** any plant or plant part that has historically been valued for medicinal, culinary or fragrance properties
- **Simple Definition:** a useful plant



Why Grow Herbs in the Home Garden?

- Easy to grow
- Don't require much space
- May suitable for containers/pots
- Useful: culinary, medicinal
- Economical
- Aromatic
- Ornamental
- Attract pollinators and other beneficial insects



Attributes

Most herbs fall into *two or more* of these categories

- **Aromatic:** Used to make scented oils, potpourris and other fragrant crafts
- **Culinary:** Leaves, flowers, seeds are used in cooking, baking, salads, teas, herbal vinegars and oils
- **Medicinal:** Used to make infusions, decoctions, tinctures, salves, oils poultices.
- **Ornamental:** Grown for fresh or dried arrangements; for flowers and foliage.

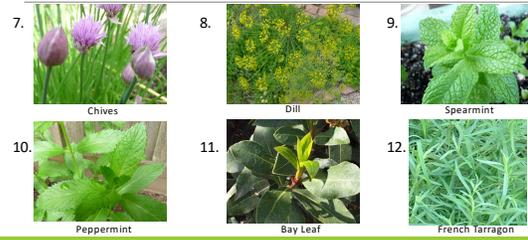
Longevity

- **Annual:** grow, bloom and produce seeds during one season (*Basil, Chervil, Cilantro, Dill, Summer Savory*)
- **Biennial:** produce foliage the first season, flowers and seeds the second season (*Parsley*)
- **Perennial:** can live for a number of years and bloom each season (*Chives, Lavender, Lovage, Mint, Sage, French Tarragon, Thyme, Winter Savory*)

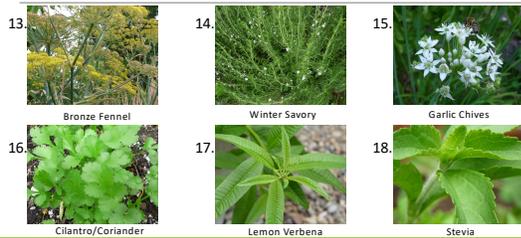
Basic Culinary Herbs for the Home Garden



Basic Culinary Herbs for the Home Garden



Other Culinary Herbs to Consider



Other Culinary Herbs to Consider



Growing Herbs

Getting Started

- Grow easily from seed (*basil, chives, marjoram, parsley*)
 - Some are better seeded directly into the garden (*fennel, dill, cilantro*)
- Grow from divisions (*thyme, mints, oregano*)
- Propagate from cuttings (*rosemary, lavender, French tarragon*)
- Get division from friends/other gardeners
- Purchase disease free plants
- How many do I need?

Growing Herbs

Considerations

- Drainage most important followed by neutral PH (6.5-7.0)
- Many drought tolerant once established
- Generally require little or no fertilizer
- Few insects or disease problems
- Beneficial insects that pollinate and control garden pests are attracted to herbs

Growing Herbs

Location

- Most like full sun or at least 6 hours daily
- Some prefer/tolerate shade/part shade (see list)
- Plant in a separate herb garden, incorporated into a flower garden and/or plant among vegetables (excellent companion plants)
- Raised beds are a good option for poor soil or other difficult landscaping problems
- Many herbs can be successfully grown in pots



Herb Gardens
Wagon Wheel – Parterre



Herb Gardens
Raised Beds - Companion Planting



Herb Gardens
Containers - Mixed Garden

Resources

Herb Plants

- Call's Country Nursery (Tremonton)
- The Greenhouse (Logan)*
- IFA
- J & J Nursery (Layton)*
- Jerry's Nursery & Garden Center*
- Willard Bay Gardens*

*Garden Members Discount

Herb Seeds

- Baker Creek Seeds
- Johnny's Seeds
- Nichols Garden Nursery
- Seed Savers Exchange
- Seeds from Italy

LOCAL

- ◊ Renaissance Seed (Alpine)
- ◊ Snake River Seed Cooperative (Boise)
- ◊ Mountain Valley Seeds (SLC)

Harvesting, Preserving & Storing



Harvesting

- Harvest fresh herbs as soon as the plant has enough foliage to maintain growth, but before flower buds open
 - ✓ Exception for herb flowers (i.e. chamomile flowers) snip flower buds off the plants shortly after the buds open.
- Harvest herbs mid-morning after the dew has dried, but before newly developed essential oils have been burned off by the sun.



Harvesting (cont.)

- Wash with cold water and hang them up just long enough for water to evaporate (or pat dry with paper towel).
- Discard bruised, soiled or imperfect leaves and stems
- When harvesting herb seeds, seed heads should be turning brown and hardening, but not yet ready to shatter



Drying

- Tie small bunches of herbs with twist ties, rubber bands or twine
- Label herbs to be dried because many look alike after drying
- Hang upside down in a dark, warm (70-80F), well-ventilated, dust-free area for 1-2 weeks
- Dry herbs for seeds by hanging the whole plant upside down in a paper bag to catch the seeds as they dry. Seeds will take 2 or more weeks to dry.



Drying (cont.)

Dehydrator Drying

- Herbs will dry quickly in a dehydrator and will produce high quality herbs.
- Place the herbs on the dehydrator trays covered with a fine screen to catch dried leaves if they fall from stems
- Preheat the dehydrator to 90-100F. Dry 1-3 hours or until herbs are dry and crumble easily
- Be careful to not over dry!



Freezing

- Freezing
 - Softer herbs like cilantro, dill and basil may retain more flavor when frozen vs dried
 - Freeze in a Ziploc bag or vacuum seal bags
 - Chop leaves and cover with water or oil and freeze in ice cube trays



Storing

- Store completely dry herbs in airtight containers in a cool and dark place. Jars with screw lids are good at keeping out moisture
- Store whole leaf and whole seeds to retain more flavor. Crushing releases the oils and flavor. Crush or grind just before using.
- Date and label. Properly stored dry herbs last about 6 months to 1 year



Cooking With Herbs

Herb Strength

Mild Herbs



Basil, bay leaf, chervil, dill, marjoram and parsley

Robust or Strong Herbs



Garlic, oregano, rosemary, sage, French tarragon and thyme



Herb Strength

- When substituting dried herbs for fresh, let the strength of the herb guide you. Stronger herbs are more concentrated when dried; milder may not be (parsley, chervil).
- For strong or robust herbs, general guideline is 1 tablespoon fresh = 1 teaspoon dried or 1/3 teaspoon dried powdered.
- Avoid mixing 2 very strong (robust) herbs together. Better to mix one strong with one or more mild flavors.

Herb Use Culinary Tips



- Add herbs to food sparingly until you become familiar with the taste.
- To get the feel for the flavor of an herb, mix it with a base of butter, margarine, cream cheese cottage cheese or yogurt. Mix 1 tablespoon chopped fresh herb to 1/2 cup desired base. Refrigerate at least one hour to blend the flavor; serve with crackers or bread.
- Chop herbs very fine to release more of the oils and flavor.
- Fresh herbs should be added toward the end in cooked dishes to preserve their flavor. Add mild herbs just before the end of cooking or sprinkle them on food before it's served. More robust herbs can be added the last 20 minutes of cooking
- Fresh herbs should be added to refrigerated cold foods several hours before serving and allowed to sit for at least 2 hours to let the flavors blend.

Herb Use Recommendations

Soup	Bay, chervil, French tarragon, marjoram, parsley, savory, rosemary, garlic, thyme, hot peppers
Poultry	Garlic, oregano, rosemary, savory, sage, French tarragon
Beef	Bay, chives, cumin, garlic, hot peppers, marjoram, rosemary, savory
Fish	Chervil, dill, fennel, French tarragon, garlic, parsley, thyme, coriander, ginger, lemon verbena
Lamb	Garlic, marjoram, rosemary, oregano, thyme, mint
Pork	Coriander, cumin, garlic, ginger, hot peppers, sage, savory, thyme
Vegetables	Basil, chervil, chives, dill, French tarragon, marjoram, mint, parsley, pepper, thyme
Cheese	Basil, chervil, chives, curry, dill, fennel, marjoram, oregano, parsley, sage, savory
Fruit	Anise, cinnamon, coriander, cloves, ginger, lemon verbena, lime basil, mint, sweet cicely
Salad	(use fresh or in salad dressing) arugula, basil, borage, chervil, chives, cilantro, dill, fennel, French tarragon, parsley, sorrel
Bread	Caraway, marjoram, thyme, oregano, poppy seed, rosemary

Bouquet Garni (Herb Bundles)

an ancient method of adding flavor to stock, soups, stews, casseroles and other hearty dishes.

Classic bouquet garni is made with 3 sprigs of parsley, 1 sprig thyme and 1 bay leaf tied together in a bunch.

A bouquet garni may be made from dried ingredients placed in a coffee filter or cheese cloth- tied bag.

Drop the bundle into the cooking pot at the beginning to allow flavors to marry. Remove before serving.

Classic	Parsley, thyme, bay leaf
Herbal	Basil, marjoram, rosemary and thyme
Hot	Chili peppers, cilantro, cumin and garlic
Mediterranean	Rosemary, sage and savory
Italian	Oregano, marjoram, thyme, savory, basil, rosemary and sage

How to Prepare a Tea Infusion

- Add 1 tablespoon of dried, crumbled herb per cup of water
- For fresh herbs add 2 tablespoons finely chopped per cup of water
- Pour just boiled or water over herbs or use strainer, tea ball or tea bag
- Cover and steep for 5 minutes. If you want stronger tea use more herb rather than steeping longer
- Optional: add honey, sugar or stevia to taste
- Covering with a lid helps retain more volatile oils
- Strain and serve or refrigerate up to 3 days



Using Stevia as a Sugar Substitute

- Sweetness varies with factors such as soil PH, climate, time of harvest. (10 - 600 x the sweetness of sugar)
- Experiment to determine the sweetness level. Better to use less as too much produces a bitter taste.
- Not a direct substitute for sugar. Use it as a flavoring much the same way you use vanilla.
- Good with strong or bold flavors such as chocolate, coffee, tea, lemonade, berries, dressings, etc.
- For baking add unsweetened apple fiber to the recipe to make up the volume lost through replacing sugar with stevia

Stevia Conversions

Granulated Sugar	Crushed Stevia Leaf Powder	Fresh Leaves	Liquid Sweetener
1 teaspoon	1/8 teaspoon	approx. 3 x crushed	2-4 drops
1 cup	1 Tablespoon	approx. 3 x crushed	1 teaspoon

*Above quantities are estimates

Herb Seasoning Mixes

- ❑ Use quality dried herbs
- ❑ Crush or grind just before mixing together
- ❑ Make in small batches to preserve flavor
- ❑ Can be used as a base in sauces, marinades, soups, etc.
- ❑ Store in an airtight container away from sunlight and heat.



Herb Salts

- ❑ Use full-spectrum real salt: grey Celtic sea salt, pink Himalayan salt, sea salt
 - ✓ Mineral rich with electrolytes to help the body absorb water
 - ✓ Better alternative to table salt, which is highly-processed sodium chloride
- ❑ Herbs to use: parsley, dill, mint, oregano, sage, thyme, cilantro, rosemary, basil, orange or lemon peel
- ❑ Shelf-life:
 - ✓ dried herbs - 1 year
 - ✓ fresh herbs - 6 months
 - ✓ Keep moisture out to prolong self-life



Herb Flavored Oils

- ❑ Use clean but dry herbs – excess moisture will cause the oil to spoil faster.
 - ✓ Can use dried herbs but flavor will be lighter
- ❑ Use any oil of choice, but the lighter the oil the more pronounced the herb flavor will be.
- ❑ Bruise herbs to release the essential oils by rubbing, pounding or chopping
- ❑ Gently warm oil in a saucepan, being careful to not overheat
- ❑ Use 1/3 to 1/2 cup chopped herbs and other seasonings, such as garlic, to 1 cup of oil
- ❑ Let cool, strain out herbs and bottle
- ❑ Use immediately or refrigerate and use within 1 week

Herbal Vinegars

- ❑ Use pasteurized vinegar with an acetic level of at least 5%.
 - ✓ Wine or champagne vinegars are preferable
- ❑ Use non-reactive equipment due to the acidity of vinegar
 - ✓ No aluminum
- ❑ Use 1 cup fresh or ½ cup dried herbs to 2 cups vinegar
 - ✓ Bruise the herbs as you add them to the jar
- ❑ Warm the vinegar in stainless-steel pan and add to the jar
- ❑ Let steep for two weeks, strain and rebottle
 - ✓ If using dried herbs, they can be left in the bottle
- ❑ Label and date.
- ❑ Store in a cool dark place for up to six months.



More Resources

Dried Herbs

- ❑ Apple Creek Bulk Food Company (local)
- ❑ Mountain Rose Herbs
- ❑ Natural Grocers (local)
- ❑ Nichols Garden Nursery
 - ✓ nicholsgardennursery.com
- ❑ Paradise Farm Herbal Apothecary (local)
 - ✓ www.pfhapothecary.com

Cookbooks & Websites

- ❑ Basic Herb Cookery by *Rose Marie Nichols McGee*
- ❑ The Herbal Kitchen by *Kami McBride*
- ❑ The Cook's Herb Garden by *Jeff Cox & Marie Pierre Moine*
- ❑ China Bayles fiction series by *Susan Wittig Albert*:
 - ✓ aboutthyme.com
- ❑ allrecipes.com
- ❑ 101cookbooks.com



Questions?
Thank you for coming!