



*Gardeners Helping Gardeners Succeed*

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# All About Herbs

- Basil:** Popular culinary herb used in flavoring tomato dishes and in fish, meats, salads and spaghetti. Basil varieties: Cinnamon, Dark Opal, Bouquet, Green Ruffle, Perennial, Purple Ruffle, Spicy Globe, Sweet, and Lemon.
- Borage:** Wonderful garnish; used in salads yogurt, soft cheese, pickles and sandwiches.
- Catnip:** Mint scent loved by cats. Rub on meat or use in teas.
- Chamomile:** Aromatic leaves and flowers are used in making teas and cosmetics.
- Chervil:** Used in salads, soups, sauces, vegetables, chicken, white fish and egg dishes.
- Chives:** Mild onion flavor; used in soups, sauces, vegetables, chicken, white fish and egg dishes.
- Cilantro:** Fresh leaves have a sharp flavor; used in meats, seasonings, salsa and sauces. Also known as Coriander.
- Coriander:** Aromatic seed crushed before use in seasoning sausage, beans, stews, cookies, wines. Use young leaves in salads, soups, poultry, and a variety of Mexican and Chinese dishes.
- Dill:** Use whole or ground in soups, fish dishes, pickles, cabbage, dill butter, cakes and breads. Also dill bouquet is available.
- Fennel:** Taste is close to that of anise or licorice. Use fresh leaves in salads and as garnishes; use seeds, whole or ground, in desserts and beverages; use stalks and bulbs in salads and soups.
- Garlic:** A strong flavoring for salads, dressings, marinades, meats, fish, vegetables, or bread.
- Hyssop:** Hyssop's minty leaves and flowers are used to flavor green salads, chicken soup, liqueurs, fruit soups, fruit salads, lamb stew, and poultry stuffing with sage. The leaves and flowers can be dried for use in teas. Bees and hummingbirds are attracted to its flowers.
- Lavender:** Used in perfumes, soaps, potpourri, sachets, and arrangements. Lavender varieties: Hidcote, Munstead, Provence, Grosso
- Lemon Balm:** Use leaves in drinks, fruit cups, salads, and with fish. Dried leaves help give lemon scent to sachets, potpourri.
- Marjoram Sweet:** Used for seasoning meats, salads, vinegars, and casserole dishes.

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| <b>Mint:</b>           | Fragrant leaves for flavoring teas or foods, such as lamb. Mint varieties: Curly, Orange, Cat, Pepper, Pineapple, Spear, Apple and Lemon.    |
| <b>Oregano:</b>        | Leaves are especially good in Italian or Mexican dishes. Also use in fish, meats, sauces and stews.  |
| <b>Parsley:</b>        | Used mainly as a garnish, but also flavors eggs, meat sauces and salads. Parsley varieties: Curled, Italian, Sherwood and Plain.             |
| <b>Rosemary:</b>       | Leaves have a pine-like aroma. Use fresh or dried leaves in fish, meat, poultry, soups and teas. Rosemary varieties: Trailing and Upright.   |
| <b>Sage:</b>           | Use leaves (fresh or dried) for seasoning meat, sausage, cheese, or poultry. Sage varieties: Regular, Golden, Pineapple, Variegated.         |
| <b>Salad Burnet:</b>   | A pleasant cucumber-like flavor with rose colored flowers. Use in salads, butters and cheeses.   |
| <b>Savory, Winter:</b> | Use fresh or dried leaves as seasoning for meats, fish, eggs, soups, vegetables; favorite with beans.  |
| <b>Shallots:</b>       | Prized cooking for its distinctive mild onion-like flavor.   |
| <b>Sweet Woodruff:</b> | Used in potpourri and to flavor beverages, including wine.   |
| <b>Tansy:</b>          | The leaf can be rubbed on meat for a rosemary-like flavor.   |
| <b>Tarragon:</b>       | Use fresh or dried leaves to season salads, egg and cheese dishes, and fish. Tarragon varieties: French and Russian.                         |
| <b>Thyme:</b>          | Add to stocks, marinades, stuffing, sauces and soups. Suits food cooked slowly in wine. Thyme varieties: Regular, Lemon, Mother, and Silver. |
| <b>Watercress:</b>     | Use mildly pungent leaves in salads, sandwiches, cottage cheese and soups.   |

## Creating a Container Herb Garden

**Herbs in an Italian combination:** Upright Rosemary, Trailing Rosemary, Oregano, Sweet Basil, Parsley, Garlic, and Garlic Chives. You can plant the Trailing Rosemary or the Sweet Basil in the top of a strawberry jar.

**Basils in combination:** Sweet Basil, Lemon Basil, Dark Opal Basil, Cinnamon Basil, Perennial Basil, and Purple Ruffle Basil.

**Mints and Sages in combination:** Plant Peppermint, Spearmint, Purple Sage, Golden Sage, Variegated Sage, French Tarragon, and Pineapple sage in the top of your container.

**Herbs with Perennials in combination:** Purple Sage, Variegated Sage, Ajuga Burgandy Glow, Lamium Pink Pewter or *Lysimachia nummularia* 'Creeping Jenny', Lavender Munstead, and use *Argyranthemum* (Marguerite) Comet Pink or Comet White in the top of your container.

**Herbs with colorful Vegetables:** Red Leaf Lettuce, Chives, Oregano, Parsley, Sweet Basil, Purple Sage, and Cilantro.

**Herbs with edible Flowers:** Nasturtium in the top of your container, with Basil, Rosemary, Purple Sage, Lemon Thyme, Lavender, and Violas.

## A Little Herbal History

For thousands of years and through a myriad of cultures, people have turned to plants for their healing powers, ritual significance, and culinary and decorative properties. The Chinese, beginning as early as 2700 BC, began documenting their experimentation with dried herbs and seeds as a means of self-healing; as a result, Chinese herbalism has maintained the longest unbroken herbal tradition. Soon, herbs moved to the Far and Middle East as the Babylonians began to import Chinese products. By 1550 BC, the Egyptians were using anise, marjoram, cumin, and cinnamon in embalming rituals, for incantations, and astrological enhancements.

The Ancient Romans, who popularized the enclosed courtyard garden as we know it today, demanded variety, which in turn caused an increase in exportation of herbal products, especially seeds, to the West. Ancient Greeks by 377 BC had basically dismissed the idea that illness was a punishment of the gods, and true herbal exploration in the West had begun.

By the Dark Ages, however, and the increase in church rule, herbalism began a steady decline as church officials repressed medical and scientific learning. Had it not been for brave monastic orders covertly continuing herbal sciences, plant studies in the West would probably have been lost.

With the beginning of the Renaissance, the true golden age for humanism, medicine and science began; recorded trial and error of herb use was again prevalent. Arab physicians took what they had learned from Western Europeans and became the true herbalists using pharmaceutical concoctions as popular healing agents. By 1500 AD, the University of Padua had one of the largest documented herb gardens, maintaining species from the Far East, New World and distant corners of Europe.

The business of westward expansion caused herbal growth in the new world to "go on hiatus" during the 19th century; the Dutch, English, French and Spanish grew significant numbers of herbs, but the Germans, Scots, and Irish who were more frontiersmen, did not see this practice as a great necessity. Early settlers of South and North America were introduced to plants' healing by Native Americans including the Aztecs, Incas, and Mayan.

Resurgence of interest in herbs in the United States came after World War I and World War II. American soldiers, after experiencing the delights of many foreign cuisines, began to mandate greater seed and plant availability.

The modern herb garden can basically be broken down into four functions: Medicinal and Ritual, Culinary, Decorative, and Landscape.

## Growing Herbs

Whether your goal is an informal herb planting mixed with other perennials, a formal knot garden planting popularized by the French and English, or a garden designed for heavy use and harvest, care and culture of your herb garden remains constant. Herbs are easy-to grow.