

Herbs

Generally speaking, most herbs are in shades of green or gray-green. In-the-ground herb gardens can range from the very small to the fairly large. Herb container gardens are popular for patios backyards, balconies or window boxes. Planting a small, manageable herb garden near the kitchen is perfect to maximize the enjoyment and use of herbs in cooking. A collection of potted herbs can be enjoyed and utilized indoors on the kitchen (or other south or west facing) window sill.

Scent & Color

Herbs are usually regarded as having a limited color range, but planting plans can make the most of the colors available. The scent of herbs usually comes from the leaves rather than the flowers. Many herbs must be touched or bruised in order to release the fragrance, while others smell better when they've been dried.

Basic Techniques

- Planting pot-grown herbs:
 - 1.) Gently remove the herb from the pot and carefully loosen the roots.
 - 2.) Plant the herb so that the surface of the root ball is level with or just surpassing the surrounding soil.
 - 3.) Crumble the soil removed from the hole and firm in around the plant to eliminate air pockets.
 - 4.) Space the herbs appropriately for their final growing size. Water in well.

Care & Maintenance

- ***November-December***
 - Tender herbs* should be moved (in their containers) to a greenhouse or a window sill in the house that receives bright, direct light several hours a day.
 - Grow parsley & marjoram in pots & over-winter in a greenhouse or indoors, as above.*

December-January-February

- Be thinking about next year's planting—order seeds and plan any alterations/improvements.
- Sow the seed of tender herbs inside, to be transplanted out doors in warmer weather.

March

- Clear away any dead growth.
- Make first seed sowing of hardy annuals and biennials in the ground if it is not too wet.
Transplant home-grown or purchased herbs into the garden or container garden.

Some herbs (ex: mint) can be invasive, so these should be planted in an area of your landscape where this will not become a problem. Otherwise, grow them in pots only.

- Cut back shrubs such as Rosemary to keep them compact.
- An annual spring mulch of homemade compost or other organic materials would be beneficial for your herbs, help control weeds and conserve moisture.

April – May

- Weed from mid-spring to early summer
- Stake & support, as necessary, any weak stemmed plants (Fennel, Dill, Borage, etc.)

June, July, August

- This is the best time for herbs, they'll be ready for harvest. Enjoy!
Collect seed from early annual & biennial herbs for fall or spring sowing (label in envelopes). Store in a cool, dry, dark place. Note: Seeds will not necessarily produce exactly the same variety of plants.
- Harvest any herbs for preserving/drying (See Harvesting & Drying, below)
- Collect any petals, flowers & scented leaves for sachets/potpurri

September – October

Take cuttings of herbs for growing indoors during the winter.

Harvesting & Drying

- Drying herbs serves as an ideal way of preserving the benefits of their scent and taste.
- Harvest herbs on a dry, sunny morning after moisture has evaporated from the leaves (but prior to full sun)
- When drying aromatic herbs, handle them as little as possible to make sure the oils remain in the foliage. Harvesting foliage is generally done prior to the appearance of the flowers
- Small-leaved herbs are best dried in small bundles on the stem—then removed and stored in sealed containers
- After herbs have dried, they can be used as year 'round seasoning, as pleasant potpourris and linen drawer-fresheners in your home