



GROWING HERBS 101

Fresh herbs are easy to grow and can make all the difference between a good dish and an extraordinary dish! Whether you're growing in a pot, windowsill or garden, there's nothing like having fresh herbs right at your fingertips.

PLACES TO GROW:

- Containers
- Raised beds
- In-ground or in the landscape
- Indoors

LIGHT REQUIREMENTS:

- Outside - in a sunny spot (a little shade is okay).
- Inside - south facing window (optional to use grow lights).

SOIL REQUIREMENTS:

- Pots - must use a potting soil.
- Raised beds - you can create and control the mix.
- In-the-ground - amend clay-based soils with compost and perlite. For sandy soil, use peat moss and compost.

FERTILIZING OPTIONS:

- McDonald Garden Center's Greenleaf plant food (organic and traditional)
- Espoma Organic Garden Tone – great for large veggie gardens.
- Fertilome Liquid Fertilizer - non-granular.

Reapply every 6-8 weeks in ground, 4-6 weeks in a pot.

DRYING HERBS:

- Put 3-4 branches together, and wrap end with twine (or zipties).
- Hang to air-dry or place in a paper bag with holes.
- Keep in a warm, dry place.
- Best herbs for drying include bay, dill, marjoram, oregano, rosemary, and thyme (last up to one year).
- Freeze basil, chives, mint, and tarragon (last for about 6 months).
- Discard leaves with mold to prevent spreading.

PRUNING:

Use them or lose them – cook with them, give them away, freeze, or dry. They need to be pruned in order to continue to produce.

RECOMMENDED HERBS

Sweet Basil - one of the most popular. Great for tomato-based dishes.

Thai Basil - peppery flavor. Great for Asian cooking.

Greek Columnar Basil - sweeter taste. Grows tall, so it is perfect for a thriller in a container.

Bay - used to flavor dishes like soups, stews, etc.

Catnip - can be dried and put in cat toys. Can also be used in teas.

continued on next page

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Fern Leaf Dill - popular with swallowtail butterflies. Reaches 18-24 inches in height. Great on potatoes, eggs, dips, grilled meat, and pickling.

Chives (onion chives and garlic chives) -flowers on chives are edible. Chives give a light, garlic taste to eggs, soups, salads, etc. Goes well with cheeses. Chives are harder to dry, but easy to freeze.

Santo Cilantro - our favorite type of cilantro. It's slower to stop producing. You can dry the seeds for coriander. Great for salsas and other Mexican dishes.

Bronze Fennel - attracts swallowtail butterflies. Nice for salads, fish, soup, and tea (which helps for indigestion).

Lavender - for essential oils, aromatherapy, and potpourri. Easy to grow in pots.

Lemon Balm - nice for salads, fish, herbal teas, and potpourri.

Lemon Verbena - goes well with fish and in teas.

Lemongrass - great for Thai dishes, Vietnamese dishes, and also repels mosquitos.

Mint - a lot of varieties to chose from. Easy to grow, can be used as a groundcover.

Oregano - lots of varieties. Perfect for Greek Italian, and Mexican dishes.

Parsley (curly and flat leaf varieties) - attracts swallowtail butterflies. Nice for cooking tomato-based dishes and used as a garnish.

Rosemary - easy to grow. Great in Mediterranean dishes. It needs to be watered more than other herbs. Tuscan Blue gets a nice blue flower.

Creeping rosemary - is great, because it can grow over the edge of a container. BBQ rosemary is another one of our favorites - you can infuse meat with it on the grill.

Sage - big leaves that are easy to grow. Amenable to drying. Great with pork. Can be used to infuse beverages. Pineapple sage can be used in teas. Red flowers attract hummingbirds.

Stevia - great natural sugar sweetener.

Tarragon - used in French cuisine. Can get 30-36 inches high.

Thyme - lots of varieties. Grows well in Hampton Roads. Perfect for seasoning meats, used in stuffing, etc. Great ground cover.

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