

Growing & Cooking with Herbs

Growing with Herbs

- Most herbs need full sun (5-8 hours daily).
- Can be planted in beds. Prepare the soil as you would for a vegetable gardening making sure it has good drainage. Use Sweet Peet or peat moss to amend your soil– your herbs will thank you. Use Organic Plant Tone to fertilize in the spring and summer.
- Can be planted in container gardens with potting soil. Don't limit yourself to traditional containers. Strawberry planters, clay pots, baskets or coco-liner window boxes are fun containers for herbs.
- Fertilize herbs heavily in order to promote growth and prevent them from going to seed.
- Constantly prune herbs to promote new growth, even when you may not need them.
- Pinching the flowers off, for example on basil and chives, keeps the herbs productive and prevents them from going to seed.
- Plant herbs in succession, especially cilantro, to have a bountiful harvest all summer.
- When selecting herbs, think about your culinary preferences. Basil, oregano, rosemary and parsley are favored in Italian dishes. Lemon grass, curry and mint are popular in Asian and Indian cooking. Cilantro and chives are popular in Mexican cuisine.
- Not all herbs are culinary. Aromatherapy uses lavender, lemon verbena, lemon balm, mints, and lemon grass.

Cooking with Herbs

- There is a difference between fresh and dried herbs.
- It is important to harvest herbs at their peak of freshness. Don't select bruised or damaged leaves for cooking purposes.
- While you can keep your herbs in fresh water, they will only last 1-2 days. If you have a large quantity, you can freeze or dry them for the winter months. To freeze, clean herbs and then chop or puree them. Then fill ice cube trays with chopped herbs and a little water or olive oil. Then freeze. To dry, wash herbs and leave on stems. Bundle with a rubber band and shake dry and then hang them upside in complete darkness in a well ventilated area. Peel leaves off stems and store in a glass jar when dried.
- Formula: 1/4 tsp. powdered herbs = 3/4 to 1 tsp. crumbled herbs = 2 tsp. fresh herbs.
 - Basil: Tomato dishes, Italian cooking, salad dressing, pesto
 - Chives: Salads, yogurt and sour cream sauces, chive butter
 - Dill: Fish, salad, breads, canning, pickling, summer salads, veggies
 - Lemon Grass: Teas, stir fries, aromatherapy, rice, marinade, Thai
 - Oregano: Italian recipes, green recipes, barbeque sauce, salad dressings
 - Parsley: Garnishes, meats and poultry, soups, stews, roasted vegetables
 - Rosemary: Lamb, pork, bread, poultry, dipping sauce, skewers, garnishes
 - Sage: Fish, poultry stuffing, meats, chowders, tomatoes
 - Tarragon: Eggs, yogurt, meat, beans, cucumbers, asparagus
 - Thyme: Tomato dishes, meats, pasta, bread
 - Fennel: Tomato dishes, salads, roasted vegetables
 - Cilantro: Salsas, bean dips, Mexican recipes, guacamole
 - Mint: Teas, jelly, sauces, lamb, cocktails

