



Herb Planting and Variety Guide

Herb Variety Guide

A - ANNUAL

B - BIENNIAL

P - PERENNIAL

TP - TENDER PERENNIAL

ALPINE STRAWBERRY (P) SUN

Runner less, ever bearing strawberry. Extra sweet, small berries from late June to October. Excellent edging plants for gardens and walkways.

ANISE (A) SUN

Seeds have a warm, refined licorice taste. Used to flavor stewed fruit, cheese, spinach, carrots, cabbage, soups and stews. Intensifies sweetness in desserts. Sun dry seeds. Use leaves fresh.

BALM, LEMON (P) SUN, PARTIAL SHADE

Very mild lemony mint flavor. Use fresh leaves for cooking; dried for teas. Add to any recipe calling for lemon juice for extra zest. Dry leaves on a sieve, a maximum 48 hours after harvest.

BASIL (A) SUN

Cool aromatic, spicy taste. Classic seasoning for tomato dishes. Chop leaves very fine if used fresh; if dried, keep well sealed. May be frozen.

BAY (TP) SUN, PARTIAL SHADE

Pungent, spicy flavor used in Creole, Spanish, and French cuisine. Component in "bouquet garni". Not hardy in this area but a good candidate for greenhouse or windowsill. Leaves may be used fresh or dried. Always remove bay leaves from food before serving.

CARAWAY (B) SUN, PARTIAL SHADE

Pungent tangy taste. Used to flavor pickles, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower and rye bread. Popular in Northern European cooking. Dry seeds on paper lined tray.

CATNIP (P) SUN

The aroma of the leaves has a well known effect on almost all cats, making them kittenish and playful. A tea made from the leaves is said to be soothing and relaxing.

CHAMOMILE, GERMAN (A) SUN, PARTIAL SHADE

Pungent, grassy flavored infusion made from flowers of German chamomile. Roman chamomile is a dwarf variety, generally used as a lawn replacement, needing infrequent mowing. Dry flowers when petals start to turn back on disk.

CHERVIL (A) PARTIAL SHADE

Delicate, spicy flavor. One of the four herbs used in "fines herbes". Never cook for more than 10-15 minutes as its flavor is destroyed. Best when used fresh. Try as a substitute for parsley as a garnish.

CHICORY (P) SUN

Slightly bitter taste to leaves. Use new young leaves in salads. Larger leaves may be cooked as one would cook spinach. Only use fresh.

CHIVES, GARLIC (P) SUN

CHIVES, ONION (P)

More delicate in flavor than garlic or onion. One of the four herbs used in "fines herbes". Add to eggs, salads, soups and sauces. Add at the last minute as delicate flavor is destroyed by overcooking. Very high in vitamin A & C. Do not dry but may be frozen.

CILANTRO / CORIANDER (A) SUN

Leaves have a warm, spicy taste; whereas the seeds have a pungent citrus flavor. This herb is commonly referred to as cilantro when it is used fresh and coriander, when used for its seeds. The roots are also used in Southeast Asian cooking. To use leaves, pull entire stalk, roots and all. Does not dry well or keep well, may be frozen. Good candidate for indoor pot growing in winter. Used extensively in Asian and Mexican cuisine.

CRESS, LAND (A) PARTIAL SHADE

CRESS, WATER (P)

Peppery flavor is common to all cresses, but the land cresses are decidedly hot. Best, and most commonly used fresh in salads, sandwiches and as a base for both hot and cold soups. May be frozen

to add to soups for flavoring. High in vitamin C.

CUMIN (A) SUN

Seeds have a strong warm, spicy taste. Used extensively in North African and Middle Eastern cuisine. Use to flavor stews, meat casseroles, cabbage, beans, and potatoes. Dry entire plant to dry seeds.

DILL (A) SUN

Pleasant sharp and sweet flavor. For fresh use, chop whole stock fine. When drying, dry seed as well as stalk. Essential for pickling, fish, and potatoes. Dill flowers may be placed in savory preserves for decorative purposes.

FENNEL, FLORENCE (A) SUN

Pleasant, slightly nutty, anise flavor in both leaves and seeds. Used in flavoring fish, cheeses, vegetables and some pastries. Swollen base may be chopped and used in salads and soups. Store by freezing leaves, drying seeds.

LAVENDER, ENGLISH (P) SUN

Ornamental herb with fragrant, narrow grey leaves and purple blooms - both having a lavender scent. Use for sachets, potpourris and in dried arrangements.

LEEKS (A) SUN

Hardy herb from the onion family. Use both the greens and the white portion of the stalk for cooking. Great in stocks and stews.

LEMON GRASS (TP) SUN

Strong citrus flavored herb used extensively in Southeast Asian food. Dried or fresh with chicken or seafood. Also added to teas. Green portion of stem may be used fresh, frozen, or dried. Lower woody stalk may be ground and added for lemon flavoring.

LEMON VERBENA (TP) SUN

Aromatic, lemony flavor. May be added to anything needing a little lemon flavor but use sparingly as it can add a perfumey smell and taste if overdone. Use to garnish iced drinks, make teas. Liven taste of salad dressings and marinades. May be dried. Excellent candidate for container gardening. Does well indoors.

LOVAGE (P) PARTIAL SHADE

Peppery, celery taste to leaves. An excellent addition to low salt or no salt dishes. Stems may be blanched, marinated and served as a first course. Dry or freeze - blanch small bundles, then freeze.

MARJORAM (P) SUN

Rich balsam like flavor. One of the five herbs used in "herbes de provence". Useful on all meats, poultry, soups and stews and gravies. Dry or freeze. Whole sprays may be wrapped in aluminum foil and frozen for several weeks. Flower stalks form in late summer and are excellent in dried arrangements.

MINT (P) PARTIAL SHADE, SHADE

Pungent, sweet flavor. Numerous flavored varieties. Used in both sweet and savory dishes. A staple ingredient in Middle Eastern cuisine. Freeze or dry. One note of caution - mint is highly invasive!

OREGANO (P) SUN

Hot peppery taste. Also know as wild marjoram, though more intense in aroma and flavor than marjoram. One of the five herbs used in "herbes de provence". Greek oregano (o. heracleoticum) has the strongest flavor. Essential ingredient in Mediterranean cooking. Dry or freeze.

PARSLEY, AMERICAN OR CURLY (A) SUN

PARSLEY, ITALIAN OR FLAT (A)

Crisp, green flavor. One of the four herbs used in "fines herbes" as well as a component in "bouquet garni". Italian or flat leaf has the stronger flavor. May be used fresh or dried in soups, sauces, vegetables, and salads. High in vitamin C. Frozen is preferable to home dried.

ROSEMARY (TP) SUN

Pungent, sweet taste. One of the five herbs used in "herbes de provence". Use with beef, veal, lamb, or chicken, fish, and cheese. Use as a skewer for tender meats and vegetables. May be used fresh or dried. Very slow growing so it is a good candidate for container gardening.



Herb Gardening

Outdoor Garden to Indoor House Plants

In New England, the winter weather makes it difficult to have a year round garden. Herbs can be an effective means to accomplish the goal of gardening even when the snow is covering the ground. Herbs are highly adaptable, relatively easy to maintain, and can even be productive in your kitchen!

Light Guidelines:

- Most herbs need strong sunlight to grow and produce well and space in south facing window is usually at a premium.
- 5 hours of direct sunlight per day. There are some exceptions; Mint, Bay, Parsley, Rosemary, Thyme and Santolina, which can take partial shade. Ginger and Lemon Balm actually like shade.

Temperature Guidelines:

Most herbs like temperatures to be somewhere between 55 and 65 degrees. Bay, Dill and the Mints are the most insistent on daytime temperature of at least 60 and nighttime of at least 50. For the most part, herbs can survive temperatures in the mid to low 40s, although Scented Geraniums and Basils can't take it below 50 degrees.

Air Circulation:

Try to keep the air moving around the plants. Give plenty of space so that air can circulate freely around them. Air in general, is dry, so you can try setting the pots on pebble lined tray filled with 1 inch or less of water, set the pot over the water and not in it.

Soil Guidelines:

Use a well drained potting mix.

Fertilization Guidelines:

Using fertilizer on herbs is a delicate balancing act. You want to fertilize them enough to keep them producing, but not so much that they get "leggy" and begin to lose flavor.

Water Guidelines:

Herbs like regular and careful watering. Water most herbs thoroughly when the soil surface starts to dry out. Try to let Marjoram, Sage, Oregano, and Thyme dry out between waterings, but be careful with Rosemary, it does not do well in dry soil. Other herbs that prefer moist soil conditions are the Mints, Lemon Balm, Ginger, and Scented Geraniums. Use room temperature water, so you avoid shocking the plants.

Pest Guidelines:

Spider mites, white fly and aphids tend to attack woody plants like rosemary. Soapy sprays can control all of the above.

Over Wintering Your Herbs:

- Dig the plants up, be very careful of the roots, try to do as little damage as possible.
- Pot carefully in an appropriately sized container
- Water the newly potted plants in
- Set them in a shady place out door 3-7 days so they can gradually adjust to the dual shock of container culture and the decreased sunlight
- Check for pests

The best time to pot your herbs is after fall harvest and before the first frost.

Productive Herbs Uses

Tea: Best served as a room temperature drink; simmer herbs in covered pot.

Chamomile Tea: Made from the flower heads of the plant; it is a very good aid for digestion and upset stomach.

Lemon Verbena, Lemon Balm and Lemon Grass: Lemon scented herbs make pleasant tasting tea, whether served hot or cold. Use each alone or in combination with each other or other herbs. They can replace a lemon slice!

Rosemary Tea: Helps cure headaches and colds. A good morning pick me up, great when combined with Green tea.

Sage Tea: Full bodied tea useful for colds and fever.

*Catnip Tea • Chamomile & Apple Mint
Lemongrass & Thyme*

Cooking Suggestions

- If you add your favorite herbs to the beginning of the cooking process they will permeate the dish, and if you add at the end of cooking you can be sure their aroma will be retained in the dish.
- Use double the amount of fresh herbs for any recipe that calls for dried herbs
- *Herb Butter:* Combine 1/2 lb of softened butter with 1-2 tsp of your favorite herb

Storage Suggestions

- Store herbs away from naturally ripening fruits or vegetables.
- Store Basil above 50°; if you must store it in the refrigerator, keep it in the warmest section and insulate if possible. Basil will turn black when it is chilled.
- Feel free to store all other herbs in the refrigerator.
- To keep fresh rinse herbs, then blot with a paper towel until dry.
- If leaves become wilted and ice water bath will usually revive them.

Drying Suggestions

- Cook at 140° on a cookie sheet for 45 minutes, then let cool for 12 hours.
- Store in a cool, dark place in an airtight container, or hang them and air dry them in a dark place

SAGE (P)

SUN

Lemony, camphor like and pleasantly bitter taste. Flavored sages may be substituted for regular sage if appropriate. Use in stuffings and poultry dishes. Use fresh or dry.

SAVORY, SUMMER (A)

SUN

SAVORY, WINTER (P)

Strong, slightly peppery flavor. One of the five herbs used in "herbes de provence" Use both with meats, fish, eggs, beans, and in soups. Good addition to low salt foods. Winter has a stronger, sharper taste but a less pleasing texture, when used fresh. May be dried or frozen.

SORREL, FRENCH (P)

SUN, PARTIAL SHADE

Lemony acidic taste. Use in salads, sauces, soup, and egg dishes and with veal, fish and pork. High in vitamin A & C and potassium. Use fresh as it does not dry well. May be frozen.

SOUTHERNWOOD (P)

SUN

Ornamental herb with soft silvery grey foliage which is pleasantly lemon scented. Makes an excellent border in the perennial garden.

SWEET WOODRUFF (P)

SHADE

Subtle grassy, vanilla taste. Dried or fresh crushed leaves are very sweet smelling. Flowers used in making "may wine". "FDA approved for use in alcoholic beverages only. Large quantities have been reported to cause vomiting and dizziness."

TARRAGON, FRENCH (P)

SUN, PARTIAL SHADE

Distinctive slightly anise-like flavor. One of the four herbs used in "fines herbes". Can be used fresh or dried in salads, eggs, cheeses, vinegars, fish and chicken. Best fresh, frozen or preserved in vinegar but may be dried. Can only be propagated by cutting or root division. Russian tarragon is not the same!

THYME (P)

SUN

Delicate green taste with a light clove aftertaste. Component of both "bouquet garni" and "herbes de provence". Use the leaves of common thyme, fresh or dried in vegetable juices, stuffings, soups, and with fish, poultry, meats. Very slow growing. Garden, lemon and variegated varieties are used in cooking. Some varieties are completely unsuitable for cooking. May be used fresh, dried, or frozen.

WORMWOOD (P)

SUN, PARTIAL SHADE

Wormwoods are excellent border or accent plants with silvery grey, fuzzy leaves. They have a bitter taste and a musty aroma. Some varieties grow to be 5 feet tall. Use in sachets. Place a few sprigs in the closet to keep away the moths.



Courtesy of your friends at

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