



Growing Herbs at Home



Herbs can be annuals, biennials, or perennials.

Type	Lifespan	How to start	Where to grow	Examples
Annuals	Lasts 1 season	Mainly from seeds	Can be grown indoors	Basil, Dill, Coriander
Biennials	Lasts 2 seasons	Can vary	Depends on the herb	Caraway, Parsley
Perennials	Return year after year	transplants and cuttings	Prefer outdoors during summer	Chives, Thyme, Mint, Rosemary, Tarragon,

Outdoor Herb Gardening

- Plan your herb garden by grouping herbs according to light, irrigation, and soil requirements.
- Herbs are naturally resistant to most disease and insects.

Guidelines for Growing Outdoors

- 1. Choose a site that gets at least 6 hours of direct sun light each day.**
The fragrance oils, which account for herb flavors, are made in the greatest amount when plants receive enough sunlight.
- 2. Do not plant** in ground where water stands or runs during heavy rains.
- 3. Build raised beds to improve drainage.** Add 2-3 inches of fine pine bark, cracked pea gravel, poultry grit, or coarse compost worked in to 8 to 12 inches deep.
- 4. Improve moisture retention.** Add 2-3 inches of fine pine bark, compost, or leaf mold to sandy soils.
- 5. Fertilize.** Use fertilizers sparingly on leafy, fast-growing herbs. Too much fertilizer will decrease the amount of fragrance oils, which add flavor.

Indoor Herb Gardening

- Herbs grow well in containers, and will grow inside during winter months.
- Indoor herbs will need sunlight & well-drained soil mix
- Some of the best herbs for growing in containers are Basil, Sage, Winter Savory, Parsley, Chives, Oregano, and Thyme.

Guidelines for Growing Indoors

- 1. Use a quality potting mix.** If the mix does not already include fertilizer, add slow release pellets to the mix or use a water-soluble product after planting.
- 2. Indoor herbs require moisture.** Mist herbs; do not drench to avoid getting their roots soggy.

3. **Improve drainage.** Add an inch of gravel at the bottom of each container to ensure good drainage.
4. **Provide enough sunlight.** Place herb in front of a south or west window to ensure it gets afternoon sunlight. Prune herbs occasionally.

Pruning promotes strong, well-shaped, sturdy growth.

5. **Repot to maintain an indoor herb garden:** repot yearly, renew annuals, and move perennials outdoors in the summer.

Preserving Herbs

Herbs can be preserved by drying, freezing alone, or freezing in a liquid such as vinegar. Preserving in herbs in oil is not recommended because of the risk that botulism toxins will be produced.

- To preserve a main harvest: Pick herbs on a calm, dry morning, just after the dew has dried. During the season up to one third of the plant may be harvested. Remove any insects and damaged leaves and rinse if necessary. Pat the leaves dry.
- Drying Herbs: Remove leaves from the base of the stems and secure a bundle of 6-12 stems with an elastic band. Hang the bundle in a cool, dry place, out of direct sunlight. Dry individual leaves by placing them on a screen or rack and turning frequently. Dehydrators can also be used to dry herbs. It is not recommended to use ovens or microwaves to dry herbs due to poor quality.
- Freezing Herbs: Many herbs freeze well. To freeze, strip the leaves from the stems and chop. Place a single layer, on a wax paper lined tray, and place in freezer until frozen. Once frozen, quickly transfer herbs into freezer bags and store in freezer.
- Freezing Herbs in a Liquid: Herbs may be frozen in a variety of liquids such as vinegar, water, stock, or tomato sauce. Freezing in an ice cube tray will yield individual portions. Portion 1-2 teaspoons of clean, chopped herbs in an ice cube tray, cover with liquid of choice, and freeze. Frozen herbs will last for up to one year.

For more information visit these websites:

1. **Clemson University Extension Office**

- Home & Garden Information Center <http://hgic.clemson.edu/>
- Online Herb Guide:
<http://www.clemson.edu/extension/hgic/plants/vegetables/crops/hgic1311.html>

2. **NC Cooperative Extension Service**

3. Growing Herbs for the Home Gardener <http://content.ces.ncsu.edu/growing-herbs-for-the-home-gardener.pdf>

4. **University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service.**

- <http://www.extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.cfm?number=B1170>