



Herbs

Crow Wing County Master Gardeners *Giving Gardens* Guide to Herbs

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DESCRIPTION

Herbs are often defined as plants with leaves, seeds, or flowers that can be used for flavoring, food, fragrance or medicine. Most herbs are easy to grow and are relatively pest free. They enhance a garden with color, texture, and form. It may be difficult to over-winter some herbs in plant hardiness zone 3b, so even though they are a perennial in warmer areas they may need to be treated as an annual in this climate.

PLANT SITE REQUIREMENTS

Sun	Full Sun (6 to 8 hours of sun daily) - Basil, Borage, Calendula, Dill, Rose, Sage, and Thyme	Partial Shade (4 to 6 hours of sun daily) - Lemon, Balm, Lovage, Mint, Parsley, and Sweet Woodruff
Soil Moisture	Dry - Catnip, Chives, Curry, Lemon Balm, and Thyme	Moist - Chervil, Dill, Fennel, Lemongrass, Oregano, and Marjoram
General	It is best to plant herbs close to your kitchen if possible. Generally speaking, herbs do not like to be planted in overly rich soil, over-fertilized, or overwatered	

PLANT SELECTION

Start from Seed - Starting herbs from seeds is easy and inexpensive. Herbs to start from seed include: Arugula, Basil, Caraway, Chervil, Dill, Marigold, Parsley, and Nasturtium.

Start from Cutting - Plants that don't produce seeds or come true from seeds can be started from cuttings. Herbs that can be propagated from cuttings include: Lemon Verbena, Mint, Oregano/Marjoram, Rosemary, Scented Geranium, and Tarragon. Start from Division - Another easy way to propagate plants is by division which works well for Bee Balm, Catmint, Chamomile, Lovage, and Tarragon

MAINTENANCE

- Avoid plant stress as most pests and diseases are opportunistic. Inspect plants frequently and use a water spray to dislodge pests. Do not use insecticides on herbs!
- Herbs grown indoors need at least five hours of sunlight daily and will benefit by being moved outside once the weather warms up.
- Deadhead as needed. This will help the plant look tidy, promote air circulation, encourage new growth, and prevent pest and disease problems.
- Questions or Problems - go to <http://www.extension.umn.edu/yard-and-garden> and search for "What Insect is this?" – "What's wrong with my Plant?" – "Is this Plant a Weed?"

HARVESTING

- It's best to harvest early in the day when the aromatic, volatile oils are strongest.
- Make sure the plant is dry as excess moisture reduces flavor and encourages mold formation.
- Cut sprigs, not just leaves, or you will end up with a stripped plant and no new growth.
- Wash the cut herbs gently in tepid water, dry them in a salad spinner, and use them as soon as possible.
- Herbs such as parsley and mint can be held over for a couple of days by placing them in a glass that has a few inches of water which should be changed daily (similar to creating a bouquet of flowers).

PRESERVING HERBS

- Freeze clean, dry, chopped dill, parsley, and chives in small plastic bags.
- Olive oil can be infused with rosemary or basil and used for flavoring.
- Mix chopped herbs with softened butter and place in the freezer in airtight containers
- Make pesto using basil, sage, parsley, or rosemary.
- Pulverize dry herbs in a coffee grinder that has been reserved for this use only; then add sea salt along with dried lemon peel and grind together for a fine blend used to flavor many a variety of dishes.
- Insert clean, dry herbs into liquid honey and after allowing a few days for the flavor to infuse, use the honey to sweeten tea or other beverages.

Herb Encrusted Goat Cheese

Instructions:

1. Chop two tablespoons each of the following herbs: chives, parsley, and lemon thyme.
2. Place each herb in an individual bowl.
3. Softened 4 – 5 ounces goat cheese and divide into three equal portions.
4. Roll each portion in one of the chopped herbs, pressing to set the herb.
5. Place all three on a small serving dish and serve with crackers.