

# GROWING HERBS

## HERBS IN CONTAINERS

**All herbs** grow very well in pots and nothing beats a pot full of them just outside your kitchen door! Plant a few of your favourite herbs in a terra-cotta pot, and they're guaranteed to look fabulous wherever you place them!

### ANNUAL HERBS

The following herbs are annuals, so they must be replanted each year. Some will seed themselves.

<b>anise</b>	<b>coriander (or cilantro)</b>
<b>basil</b>	<b>dill</b>
<b>borage</b>	<b>Florence fennel</b>
<b>chamomile (German)</b>	<b>sweet marjoram</b>
<b>chervil</b>	<b>summer savory</b>

### BIENNIAL HERBS

**Parsley** and **caraway** are biennials. They will form leaves their first year and then flower and produce seeds their second. Then they usually die, although many will re-seed themselves.

### TENDER HERBS

Lemon verbena is a tender perennial and needs protection from frost in the winter. You can grow it in a sunny window.

### SHRUB-LIKE HERBS

These herbs are more like shrubs because they form woody stems at the base:

<b>sage</b>	<b>rosemary</b>
<b>bay</b>	<b>southernwood</b>
<b>lavender</b>	

### PERENNIAL HERBS

The following herbs are perennials. They live from year to year, although some are herbaceous, meaning the foliage withers in the fall.

<b>anise-hyssop</b>	<b>marjoram</b>
<b>angelica</b>	<b>mint</b>
<b>beebalm</b>	<b>Welsh onion</b>
<b>burnet</b>	<b>oregano</b>
<b>catnip</b>	<b>pennyroyal</b>
<b>chamomile (Roman)</b>	<b>rue</b>
<b>chicory</b>	<b>winter savory</b>
<b>chives</b>	<b>French sorrel</b>
<b>comfrey</b>	<b>strawberries</b>
<b>fennel</b>	<b>sweet woodruff</b>
<b>feverfew</b>	<b>French tarragon</b>
<b>horehound</b>	<b>thyme</b>
<b>hyssop</b>	<b>watercress</b>
<b>lemon balm</b>	<b>wormwood</b>
<b>lovage</b>	

## HERBS IN THE KITCHEN

### BASIL

Basil is a wonderful herb for many Mediterranean dishes. Fresh basil is superb on fresh tomatoes with a little olive oil or in hot tomato dishes. Basil will also work well with rice dishes, zucchini, beans and mushrooms. Try a pesto sauce (fresh basil, olive oil, parmesan cheese, garlic & pine nuts). Add basil leaves near the end of cooking time for better flavour. Fresh basil leaves keep their flavour if preserved in oil or vinegar.

### CARAWAY

Caraway is a biennial herb similar in appearance to carrots. Seeds are used for flavouring cakes, apple dishes and candies. Leaves may be used to flavour stews & soups.

### CHERVIL

This herb is frequently used in French dishes. It has a delicate flavour. Freshly chopped chervil can be added to omelettes, salads, dressings and to roasted chicken. Add this herb at the end of the cooking time so flavour is not lost. Chervil may be preserved in vinegar and oil.

### CHIVES

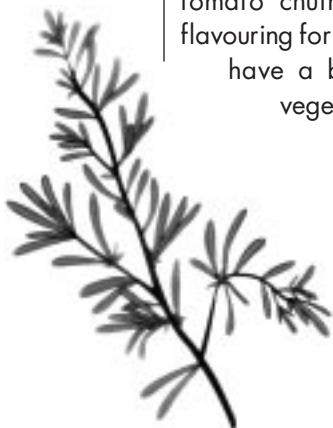
Freshly chopped chives are a flavourful addition to many foods. Sprinkle them on soups, salads, potatoes, chicken, cooked vegetables and egg dishes. For a milder onion flavour, add chives to hamburgers or mix them in sour cream or plain yogurt for a potato topping. Add chives at the end of cooking for better flavour. Chives freeze well but dry poorly.

### CORIANDER

The coriander leaves (cilantro) and the coriander seeds have two distinct flavours. The seeds are aromatic and can be used in tomato chutneys and curries. The seeds are an excellent flavouring for stir fried vegetables, soups and sauces. The leaves have a biting flavour and are used in salsas, cooked vegetables and chicken dishes.

### DILL

Dill, an annual herb, is very easy to grow. Great with fish and essential for pickles. Use both leaves and flower heads for an aromatic addition to dishes.



## FENNEL

Fennel has a strong aniseed or licorice flavour. Chop tender stalks and use in salads and on cooked vegetables. Add the seeds to sauces, breads, savory crackers and the water for poaching fish. The young, thick, basal stalk of Florence fennel can be eaten like celery or baked, braised or boiled as a vegetable. The flavour is similar to aniseed.

## GARLIC

A strong flavouring for all savory dishes, hot and cold. Rub a clove around a salad bowl to flavour salads. Add one or two minced cloves to dressings, marinades or stir fry meals. Mash cloves with butter and bake into French bread, grilled meat or fish. Garlic can be baked as a vegetable and spread onto slices of hearty breads. The leaves have a milder flavour.

## LEMON BALM

Use fresh lemon balm leaves in salads or to make an herbal tea. Add to white sauce for fish or spread over chicken before roasting. Finely chopped leaves will add a lemony taste to sauerkraut, mayonnaise, sauces, stuffings, fruit salads and custards. Freeze leaves in ice cubes to add to summer drinks.

## LOVAGE

The leaves, stems and seeds of lovage have a celery flavour. Young leaves and blanched stems can be steamed like a vegetable and served with a white sauce. Young leaves can also be added to soups, stews and salads.

## MINT

With their clean, sharp flavours, the mints are an aid to digestion and can be used individually or blended. An excellent herb in mint sauce, syrups, vinegars and in teas. Add mint to potatoes, to a garlic and cream cheese dip or to yogurt dressing. Mint can be added to chocolate cakes, rich desserts or baked with raisins and currants in pastries. Mint leaves can be crystallized for decorations.

## OREGANO AND MARJORAM

Marjoram has a savory flavour and oregano is a bit stronger. Marjoram is a good addition to chicken, fish, beef, game, sausages, pastas and vegetable soups. Vegetables such as zucchini, tomatoes, potatoes and peppers are delicious with marjoram. You can also use it with cheese dishes and omelettes. Oregano is wonderful sprinkled on pizzas. Oregano and marjoram will dry well.

## PARSLEY

Parsley can be used both as a culinary and ornamental herb. It can be added to bay leaves and thyme for a *bouquet garni* or used fresh to decorate a serving platter. Parsley enhances the flavour of other foods and herbs. Use parsley freely and include minced stems which are more flavourful. Parsley is good in soups, sandwiches, salads, sauces, mayonnaise and egg dishes. Add near the end of the cooking time for better flavour.

## ROSEMARY

Since rosemary helps to digest fatty foods, it traditionally has been used in the cooking of lamb, pork, sausages, pigeon and stuffings. Rosemary can be used dried or freshly chopped. You may want to remove sprigs as they can be tough. A whole sprig can be added to the oven when baking bread. Add rosemary to oil or vinegar to flavour them.

## SAGE

Sage is a strongly flavoured herb but complements strongly flavoured foods and aids in the digestion of fats. Sage is a good flavouring to add to cheese and cream cheese dips. It is a great herb to use in onion soup, stewed tomatoes, omelettes, scones and herbed breads. Use only the best leaves to dry or the flavour will be musty.

## SUMMER OR WINTER SAVORY

Savory flavour is similar to thyme. The perennial winter savory is a bit milder than the annual summer savory. Bean and lentil dishes are enhanced with savory. Mix with parsley and chives when roasting duck. Use minced fresh leaves on soups and sauces. Savory can be used to flavour vinegar.

## SORREL

Sorrel is sharp flavoured with a bit of lemon taste. It can add a little tang to sauces, salads or blander dishes. Sorrel soup is a classic dish. It can also be cooked and served like spinach.

## TARRAGON

Tarragon is one of the *finesse herbs* with chervil and parsley. It has a savory flavour with a little tang. It is a must in Bearnaise and hollandaise sauces. Tarragon is also great in soups, sauces, vegetables, fish and egg dishes. Add to roast chicken for a wonderful flavour.

## THYME

Thyme has a long history of culinary uses. It is used with parsley and bay leaves in a *bouquet garni*. This herb stimulates the appetite and aids in the digestion of fats. Use thyme with poultry, game, beef and shellfish. Lemon thyme is great with fish and poultry dishes. Fresh thyme is a strong flavour, so use with discretion.



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