

# NORTHERN

# Gardener

CREATING & CARING FOR YOUR ENVIRONMENT

## Herbs



The importance of herbs dates back thousands of years. They have been used in cooking, medicines, as fragrances and cosmetics, and for adornment. They are used today in many of the same ways, and are enjoying an upsurge in popularity. Besides the numerous uses of the plants, they are easy to grow and require a small amount of care and attention. They will grow in ordinary garden soil in full sun. Herb plants can be grown with little more than occasional watering and trimming. If outdoor garden space is unavailable, herbs can be grown and enjoyed as pot plants.

### Perennial Herbs

These plants come back year after year from the same root system. Some are hardier than others and require less care. More tender varieties should be mulched in late fall or treated as annuals and replanted each spring.



**CHIVES** - Hardy perennial that is an old culinary favorite. Pretty in the rock garden and in the herb border. Excellent fresh or frozen. Flavor does not hold well if dried. Pretty lavender-pink flowers during early summer.

**CARING FOR YOUR ENVIRONMENT**

- ✓ Using natural herbs on food is a delicious way to flavor food without increasing your sodium intake.

Snipped leaves useful in salads and dishes. Grows 12" tall.

**CHIVES, GARLIC** - A very hardy perennial with a zesty garlic flavor. Best used fresh or frozen like culinary chives. Beautiful white flowers mid to late summer. Keep seed heads pruned off to prevent spreading. Grows 12" tall.

**LAVENDER** - An aromatic old world herb chiefly grown for its rich scented oil and for use in sachets and pot-pourri. A very tender perennial that should be considered an annual. The variety 'Hidcote' may survive some winters if mulched late fall and is protected with snow cover. 1 - 2 feet tall.

**PEPPERMINT** - An old time favorite for flavoring candy and tea made from the leaves. A hardy perennial that can become quite invasive if left unattended. 24-30 inches in height and spreads by underground rhizomes.

**SPEARMINT** - Delicious true spearmint flavor and scent. Good for mint jelly and as a tea, also add to fruit cups. Very hardy perennial that will grow 30 - 36" tall and can become invasive like peppermint.

**TARRAGON, FRENCH** - A hardy perennial used with chicken, fish,

eggs, sauces and in vinegar. One of the finer culinary herbs for the garden. 3' tall.



**THYMES** - A group of tender perennials that like to grow in full sun in a light, well-drained soil. They make excellent rock garden plants but may die out in winters with no snow cover. Used with veal, fish, chicken, game, and in tomato sauce and salads.



**FRENCH THYME** - Flavorful thyme for meats and vegetables, 12 inches tall. Very tender perennial that should be treated as an annual.

**LEMON THYME** - 6" bushy plant with strong lemon scent and flavor. Excellent for fish.

**WOOLY THYME** - A low creeper with round, fuzzy gray leaves. Works well between stepping stones or as a ground cover.

### Annual Herbs

Herbs that can be started from seed or readily purchased as a potted plant from garden centers. These herbs die out each fall and need to be replanted each spring.



## **BASIL**

**DARK OPAL** - A pretty ornamental herb with rich purple foliage. Adds delicious flavor and color to vinegar. Works well in floral arrangements. 18-24 inches tall.

**LEMON BASIL** - A smaller growing basil with lemon fragrance. Used in vinegars and tea. 18" tall.

**SPICY GLOBE BASIL** - A very popular basil with a compact, mound-shaped growth habit. An excellent border plant. The small, bright green leaves are very spicy and can be used as a

breath freshener or in tomato dishes. 10-12" tall.

**SWEET BASIL** - Everyone's favorite herb. Adds delicious flavor to soups and stews, as well as classic pesto, tomato sauces and apple betty. 24-36 inches tall.

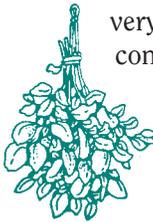
**CHERVIL** - Considered a gourmet parsley with a slight anise-like flavor. Fresh leaves useful in salads, omelets and herb butters. Shade tolerant herb that grows to 2'.

**CORIANDER** - Also known as Chinese parsley or Cilantro. The leaf is used with meats, poultry and in spicy sauces. Seeds

are used in soups, curries and pickling. 15-18" tall.

**DILL** - The tasty foliage and seeds make flavorful pickles, also good

in breads, dips, fish and cottage cheese. Reseeds itself readily for next year's crop. 3-4' tall.



**FENNEL** - Seeds for flavoring breads and rolls. Leaves enhance flavor of fish and poultry. 2-3' tall.

**OREGANO** - A favorite Italian seasoning for spaghetti sauce. Also used on salads, tomatoes and in herb seasoning mixtures. A tender perennial that should be treated like an annual. 12-15" tall.

## **PARSLEY**

**CURLY PARSLEY** - This is the garnish that we spend a lot of our restaurant life pushing around the plate. A pretty plant with crisp, ruffled, dark green leaves. Useful as garnish for salads, vegetables and potatoes. Use with egg dishes and in casseroles. 8-10" tall.



**ITALIAN PARSLEY** - A tasty parsley with dark green leaves that are flat and sharply cut. Use like curly parsley. 10-12" tall.

## **ROSEMARY:**

A wonderfully aromatic herb with a long and rich history. Lends itself easily to windowsill culture and potted topiary training.



## **UPRIGHT ROSEMARY** -

Use with all kinds of meats (especially lamb) in casseroles and marinades. A wonderful herb for the winter kitchen garden. 1-2' tall.

**CREeping ROSEMARY** - Trailing form with the same culinary uses as the Upright rosemary.

## **SAGE**

**GARDEN SAGE** - An attractive herb used with many meats, stuffings, marinades and salads. Works well for

grilling if dipped lightly in olive oil and then wrapped around meat. 2' tall.



SAGE

**GOLDEN SAGE** - A fine addition to the decorative herb garden with its beautiful gold-edged leaves. Use the same way as garden sage. 12-15" tall.

**PINEAPPLE SAGE** - As the name implies it has a wonderful pineapple fragrance. Bright red flowers add to its ornamental appeal. Mix with fruit. 30-36 " tall.

**PURPLE SAGE** - Another ornamental herb with a pleasing tinge of purple on each leaf. Good flavor and aroma. 15-18" tall.

**SAVORY, SUMMER** - Use with beans of all kinds, game, lentil soups and stuffing. Also useful in herbal wreaths,. Bees are quite attracted to the white flowers of this herb. 15-18" tall.

**SWEET MARJORAM** - Very fragrant herb for meat casseroles, chicken, stuffings, egg dishes and cheeses. Sweeter than oregano. 10-12" tall.

## **Harvesting Herbs**

The best time to harvest fresh herb foliage is just prior to blooming. Clip the foliage in the morning after the dew has evaporated but before the sun becomes too hot. Cut approximately 1/3 of the foliage off to encourage the plant to put on new growth. Use only the younger leaves because they have more flavor and are less bitter.

Seeds are ready to be harvested when the seed heads change color, usually greenish-brown. To harvest, cut off seed heads on a hot, dry day. Dry for two weeks on harvesting tray, then store in airtight containers.

Harvest tender herbs before they freeze down in the fall. Harvest by pulling whole plant up by roots, shake the soil off and store in a dry room for two weeks. Dried leaves are best stored long term away from heat to retain better flavor. Use herbs as needed throughout the winter and spring until a fresh new garden can be planted in May.