

# Fresh & Fragrant: A Comprehensive Guide to Growing Herbs



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## Growing your own herbs can be a game changer for your health, your garden, and your taste buds.

Adding herbs to your garden is easy, and this guide will teach you everything you need to know about starting your home-grown herb garden.

The first thing to know is that our soil is very different from the soil found in France or Italy where herbs grow native to the land. We suggest starting your herb garden with a raised garden bed or a container, which will provide your herbs with the best possible growing environment and the success of your flourishing herb garden!

There are so many benefits to growing herbs at home versus buying them from the store, and these are our top three reasons why we love home-grown herbs:

1

### NUTRIENTS

Home-grown herbs are more nutrient dense than store bought. Herbs start losing their nutritional value from the moment they are harvested. Grabbing some basil from your garden is going to fuel your wellness much more effectively than the plastic-contained bunch you buy at the grocery store!

2

### FLAVOR

Flavors are much more full when herbs are freshly harvested. Not only do home-grown herbs maintain their nutritional value, they also pack more of a punch as a garnish or seasoning.

3

### ABUNDANCE

Herbs are resilient and abundant plants, meaning you can harvest again and again and still come back for more.



You can choose from a **pot, a container, or a raised bed** as long as it is at least 6" deep for the roots. (Some herbs require 12" of soil - check before you plant!) If you decide to use a container, make sure it has proper draining holes to avoid drowning your plants.

Herbs love well-draining soil, so a mixture of topsoil, compost, and sand will provide an excellent blend for your herbs. Before putting soil in your container or raised bed, lay landscape cloth or any other weed barrier at the bottom to keep weeds out and soil in.

Once you have a plan for where and how you want to start your herb garden, the next step is deciding what to grow! Considering different herb families can help you create a unique herb garden that works for you and your kitchen.



## **Herb Families and Their Needs**

There are several herb families that have different watering and temperate needs. You can piece your garden together like a puzzle to account for diverse needs when growing herbs from different families.

### **The Mint Plant Family**

Peppermint, spearmint, basil, culinary sage, English & French thyme, marjoram, and Spanish lavender are examples of herbs that come from the mint (*Lamiaceae*) family. These are Mediterranean-type herbs with shallow roots and prefer dryer conditions, so they are perfect for smaller 6" containers or the outside edges of your raised bed where soil dries more quickly. *Lamiaceae* plants also produces more as you harvest. You can encourage these herbs to grow more fully by harvesting above the nodes of the plants where leaves can branch off into new growth. They are very beginner-friendly and are perfect for starting your herb garden!

### **The Carrot Plant Family**

Anise, coriander, dill, fennel, and parsley are examples of herbs from the carrot plant (*Apiaceae*) family. Like carrots, these herbs have sizable taproots and require deeper planting conditions—at least 12 inches. They prefer cooler temperatures and more moisture, so we recommend planting them towards the middle of your container. These herbs flower in warmer weather, and as summer warms up you can expect the flowers from the *Apiaceae* family to attract butterflies to your garden!

## The Daisy Plant Family

Chamomile, calendula, echinacea, and dandelions are examples of the daisy plant (*Asteraceae*) family. The flowers from these herbs are most commonly used in teas. Interesting fact: daisy plant herbs produce flowers long after they produce their leaves, so patience is key. Their harvest is worth the wait! Once these plants are established, they are fairly drought resistant. Planting them on the perimeter of your raised bed can help ensure their preferred moisture levels.



## The Onion Family

Onions, chives, and garlic are examples of the onion plant (*Allioideae*) family. These are some of the easiest herbs to grow and are another great place to start for beginner herb gardeners. Similar to the mint plant family, onion plants like drier conditions.

## Annual vs. Perennial Herbs

Annual herbs are soft herbs that complete their life cycle in one season. Herbs from the carrot plant family, like dill and cilantro, are annual herbs that need to be replanted each year.

Perennial herbs are woody herbs that continue to grow throughout the year, or die back during colder months and come back when the weather warms. Most herbs in the mint family can survive for several seasons with the right conditions (although rosemary is not a perennial in our hardiness zone).

## Trivia Time

Q: In Simon & Garfunkel's classic song "Scarborough Fair," which herbs are mentioned in the lyrics that are also found in a traditional herb garden? (It's also the name of the album.) We'll give you a hint.



A: Parsley, Sage, Rosemary & Thyme. (If you know, you know - and now you probably can't get the song out of your head!)