

Make the most out of your herb garden



Jeff Rugg
Greener
View

Question: Is an herb garden too complicated for an ordinary gardener like me?

Answer: You may have heard of herb gardens or kitchen gardens, or even gardens of herbs where the plants are trimmed into fancy mazes or knots, but you don't have to do any of that to get the healthful benefits of fresh herbs.

Herbs are plants grown for flavoring in foods and beverages, as fragrances in potpourris, and sometimes for medicinal qualities. Leaves are used in some and the flowers, seeds or roots are used in others. Most are easy to grow as annuals even if they are a perennial type of plant. They can be planted in containers or in the garden. Many have decorative qualities such as colorful leaves, bright flowers or strong fragrances that make them nice additions to flower beds, and some even attract butterflies and hummingbirds.

Look at the plant label for information as to its culture. Most prefer full sun, but many can grow in a few hours of daily shade. Almost all prefer soil that is damp but not too wet, and a few require dry soil. The size of the plant will determine where in the garden it is used. Some only grow an inch or two tall and spread out, while others

GARDEN Hints and Tips

Herb Garden

Herbs grow easily in a variety of conditions, making them ideal for new gardeners. Things to consider before growing an herb garden include sunlight, watering and soil needs.

PLACEMENT

When considering a location, an herb garden needs two things — six or more hours of sunlight and well-drained soil.

SOIL

You will need to prepare the soil. Most herbs like neutral to slightly acidic soil. Even if your soil is in pretty good condition, working some compost into the soil will help provide nutrients to the herbs while they are growing.

WATERING

Most herbs need water when the soil feels dry to the touch. A good rule of thumb for most herbs is to water about once per week. During extreme heat or drought conditions, sometimes twice per week will be needed.



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can easily grow over five feet tall.

Herbs that are grown for their leaves can be harvested a leaf or two at a time as necessary for a recipe, or whole branches and plants can be gathered and used as fresh herbs or dried for later use. During the summer, but especially in the fall as winter weather comes to kill the annual herbs, they can be gathered for drying. Most herbs are harvested for drying just as they begin to flower. This is the time that the plant has the most oil, which is used for flavoring or fragrance.

If the plant is a perennial that you are leaving in place for a

few years, only cut off about a third of the leaves and branches at a time. Harvesting is a type of pruning. Flowers may be cut off to induce more leaf growth. Use a sharp pruner and maintain the plant's shape and compactness. You may get several harvests off the same plant in a single season.

Herbs grown for seed will be allowed to bloom and produce seeds. Watch the plant so that you don't wait too long and all the seeds fall off. Cut off the whole flower head when the seeds mature and place it into a bag so you don't lose any seeds. Spread the seed heads out on a tray for drying.

Before drying seeds or leaves, it is a good idea to wash them off. There may be garden dust and dirt on them, and they may have insects and spider webs too. Once they are clean, spread them out on paper towels to dry. They can be air dried, or if there are larger stems, they can be tied together and placed in paper bags to dry. That way if they break apart you keep everything together. It can take a month or more to get them completely dry. If they don't dry completely, they can get moldy when stored.

Herbs dried with heat can dry faster, but if the heat is too high, the volatile oils can evaporate away, leaving a bunch of dead leaves that don't taste like much.

After they are dry, the leaves can be crumbled off the stems or left whole. Place everything into airtight jars. Any air can allow the oils to evaporate. Sunlight can also reduce the quality of the dried seasonings, so store the jars in a dark location.

As I mentioned above, some herbs' flowers attract butterflies. This is especially true of anise, dill and parsley. They are used by swallowtail butterflies as a food source for their caterpillars. At first, you might be upset to lose a whole plant as the caterpillars eat it all up, but if you enjoy swallowtail butterflies it can be worth it. One way around this problem is to plant several extra plants of these caterpillar favorites. Then as you see caterpillars on the one you are saving for yourself, move the critters to the other plants.

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Palm Beach retail surging thanks to migration influx to South Florida

Palm Beach retail is surging this spring thanks to South Florida's robust real estate market and migration of new residents. Palm Beach major retail venues such as Worth Avenue, County Road, The Royal Poinciana Plaza are performing well.

The retail market is seeing its fewest vacancies in the last 25 years. The seasons are longer, and the stores are packed.

The robust spring is a product of the region's migration influx. Over the past two years, many new-to-market financial and tech firms have moved to Palm Beach as well as many tax-burdened residents from places like New York and California.

Affluent customers are moving here on a permanent basis and that has made retailers even more confident to be long-term tenants.

West Palm Beach-Boca Raton-Delray Beach Ranked No. 3 Best CRE Market in the U.S.

West Palm Beach-Boca Raton-Delray Beach market is ranked No. 3 hottest CRE Market in

the U.S., according to IQ 2022 NAR Commercial Real Estate Metro Markets Conditions Index. Palm Beach scored an index score of 76.

An index number for an area above 50 means that market conditions were stronger than a national average while one below 50 means weaker. The index combines upwards of 25 variables, depending on what information is available.

The NAR index, which shows relative performance, "is calculated using 25 variables pertaining to the metro area's economic conditions (job growth, unemployment rate, wage growth), demographic conditions (net domestic migration, population growth), commercial market conditions for multifamily, office, industrial, and retail property sectors (vacancy rate, absorption, rent growth, cap rate, professional/business services, and retail trade job growth) and employment conditions in the hotel/lodging industry (job growth, share of leisure and hospitality workers to total employment)."

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