



Fact Sheet

HERBS - For Culinary Use

Herbs are the easiest of plants to grow as long as you provide them with the right conditions. Culinary herbs are used to infuse food & drink with their aroma or flavour. They can be annuals or perennials and can be grown amongst other plants in garden beds, in pots, or used to create formal herb gardens. The most popular herbs & their availability include:

Basil: *Ocimum* spp. Basil is frost tender and is available Spring, Summer & early Autumn. Basil leaves are widely used in cooking. Do not let the plants flower as they will go to seed. Varieties include; Sweet, Bush, Pesto & Spicy Globe Basil. Basil can be grown from seed or seedlings, is an annual requiring full sun & is excellent for pots.

Bay Tree: *Laurus nobilis*. A bushy but slow growing evergreen tree suitable for pots, topiary and hedging. The aromatic leaves are used fresh or dried & have a slightly spicy flavour. It is frost hardy and requires full sun/part shade.

Chives: Frost hardy perennials that belong to the onion group. Garlic chives have starry white flowers, while onion chives have round heads of mauve flowers. The edible leaves are used in a wide variety of dishes. You should divide clumps every few years. Chives require a sunny position, can be grown in pots and make lovely borders in cottage gardens.

Coriander: *Coriandrum sativum*. Coriander will bolt to seed if the flowers are not religiously removed. It is a fine leaf plant that looks similar to Italian Parsley and is very aromatic. Use the leaves and seeds in curries and desserts. Coriander is an annual and is frost hardy. It requires full sun & good drainage and can be grown in pots.

Curry Plant: *Helichrysum angustifolium*. The Curry plant grows to 60 cm and has silvery foliage that smells exactly like curry powder when crushed. This Perennial is frost hardy & requires full sun & good drainage and can be grown in pots.

Dill: *Anethum graveolens*. Dill grows to almost 1m in height with fine, feathery, light green foliage. It is said to attract beneficial insects to the garden. Use fresh leaves or dried seed, especially in French cooking. This annual is frost hardy and looks best grown amongst other plants. It will self seed.

Garlic: *Allium sativum*. Garlic is grown from individual garlic cloves. You should plant garlic in Winter or early Spring. Lift and harvest when the foliage dies down in Autumn. This perennial is frost hardy, needs full sun and a well drained position.



Lovage: *Levisticum officinalis*. Lovage grows to about 1m with foliage that has a strong celery flavour. It can be used as an alternative to celery in soups & stews. Lovage is a perennial, is frost hardy and benefits from regular feeding.

Marjoram: *Origanum marjorana*. Marjoram grows to about 45cm and has small white flowers and aromatic leaves that can be used fresh or dried. It is a Perennial which is frost hardy and needs full sun & good drainage. Marjoram is good for borders and pots.



Mint: *Mentha* spp. There are many different varieties of mint. As most varieties are spread by runners they are best grown in pots if you don't want them taking over the garden. Varieties include; Common, Corsican, Peppermint, Applemint & Spearmint. Mint is perennial and is frost hardy. It needs lots of water and will grow in full shade.

Oregano: *Origanum vulgare*. Oregano grows to a height of approx. 45cm and spreads out with pretty pink/purple flowers in Summer. Aromatic leaves can be used fresh or dried. It makes a tough groundcover for beds, rock walls or pots. This perennial is frost hardy requiring full sun, a well drained position & will tolerate dryness.

Parsley: *Petroselinum crispum*. Both the common 'Curly' & the Italian parsley, are biennials and will only live for 2 seasons before going to seed. Parsley is frost hardy & needs full to part sun and does well in pots.

Rosemary: *Rosmarinus officinalis*. Rosemary is a small to medium evergreen shrub with mauve or pink flowers and small, very aromatic foliage that can be used fresh or dried & goes particularly well with roast lamb. It is frost hardy and is good for dry, exposed areas. Rosemary is great for use in low, formal borders & hedging. Groundcover varieties are also available.

Sage: *Salvia officinalis*. Sage is an evergreen shrub growing to about 1m tall. It's grey aromatic foliage can be used fresh or dried and goes well with meat dishes. Sage is good in cottage gardens, is frost hardy and needs full sun and excellent drainage.

Tarragon - French: *Artemisia dracunculoides*. Tarragon is a small herbaceous (dies off over Winter) perennial to about 40cm. It's long, narrow green leaves have a warm aniseed flavour that goes well in classic French cuisine. It re-shoots in Spring, is frost hardy and requires a well drained position.

Thyme: *Thymus vulgaris*. Thyme is a small evergreen perennial which grows to about 30cm. It has pretty pink/purple flowers in Spring & Summer. The foliage is small with a strong savoury flavour and can be used fresh or dried. It is good for pots and low borders, is frost hardy, and requires full sun and a well drained position. Varieties include; Caraway, Orange Peel, Wild, Creeping & Lemon Thyme.

Create visual interest and spice up your cooking with a functional container garden. A pot of herbs offers textural interest, fragrance and a variety of taste sensations. Plant your own terracotta pot of aromatic edibles - you can use the following as a guide or make up your own combination.

- Parsley** - Provides a lush cascade over the pot's edge. Flat-leafed varieties are more aromatic than curly types.
- Oregano** - Features light pink flowers in a profusion of richly scented leaves. The golden variety provides striking foliage contrasts.
- Thyme** - A hardy aromatic herb that will grow year after year.
- Purple Sage** - Provides dramatic colour & is great to cook with. Ideal in pasta sauces.
- Dill** - Seeds have a stronger flavour than the foliage.
- Rosemary** - Blue-green needle-like leaves.
- Purple Basil** - Unusual dark purple leaves that grow quickly & provide a lush background for the other plants. It has a light but very full flavour.





Planting out your pot:

1. Fill the bottom of your terracotta pot with a 5cm layer of perlite or pebbles to ensure good drainage.
2. Add moistened terracotta potting mixture on top of the perlite or pebbles.
3. Plant the Purple Sage in the middle first making sure you place it deep enough in the pot for the roots to provide support as the sage grows.
4. Plant the Purple Basil, Rosemary & Dill around the Purple Sage leaving enough room for the plants to grow.
5. Plant the Parsley, Oregano or Thyme. Slant them slightly outwards toward the edge of the pot to help them spill over the edge.
6. Water and place a layer of mulch around the plants. Place the pot in a nice sunny spot that is sheltered from the wind.



Alternative planting ideas for your pot:

Why not try a salad in a pot using Chives, Oak-leaf lettuce, Oregano, Parsley & Calendulas. Or how about a low maintenance herb pot using Lavender & Rosemary - both species are very hardy & the sprawl of the prostrate Rosemary complements the tall Lavender beautifully. Make sure you trim the plants when they grow too long.

Herbs in containers need sunshine to develop their flavours and scents, but make sure you water them daily as the sun they love also dries them out quickly. Water morning or evening and in hotter weather water twice a day. Use a liquid fertiliser weekly to help with growth continuity.

You can also include edible flowers in your potted garden, such as Nasturtiums, Calendula, Pansies, Violets, Borage, etc.



**** TIP ****

A strawberry pot makes
a great herb pot too!!