



# Growing and Using Herbs

Presented By  
Lori Bowling  
Boyd County Extension Agent for Horticulture



University of Kentucky  
College of Agriculture,  
Food and Environment  
*Cooperative Extension Service*

# General Facts about Growing Herbs

## Location, Sunlight and Soil:



Start with a rich loamy soil –run a soil test. Amend the native soil with compost. Herbs prefer well-drained soil.



Select a planting area with the proper moisture and light requirements-most herbs require 6-8 hours of direct sunlight but there are some that will tolerate partial shade like Chamomile and Chives.



Grow herbs that you can use and be sure to know their growth habits.



# General Facts about Growing Herbs

## Planting:



You can start with seeds or buy seedlings at a local garden center/greenhouse



Consider growing different herbs together that benefit each other, avoiding those that compete with each other





# General Facts about Growing Herbs

## Watering and Fertilizing:



Water herbs deeply and allow the soil to dry out slightly between watering. Avoid overwatering to prevent root rot.





Herbs usually don't require heavy fertilization but a light application of a liquid fertilizer can be beneficial.




# General Facts about Growing Herbs

## Maintenance:

 You will want to regularly prune and deadhead your plant so that they will become bushier and will not go to seed.


 Mulching around the base of your herb plant will help to keep weed growth down and help the soil to retain moisture


 When harvesting your herbs you will want to harvest when they are not in bloom. This will also help to encourage more leaf growth. If you are harvesting for the bloom, after flower buds appear and before they open, this is when they have their most intense oil concentration and flavor. If you are harvesting blooms for craft projects you should pick those just before they are fully open




# General Facts about Growing Herbs

## Harvesting:

 As a general rule it is best to harvest herbs in the morning after the dew has dried off the leaves but before the heat of the day.

 When harvesting you should take no more than 1/3 of the entire plant at a one harvesting to allow the plant to continue to thrive.


 Try to leave some of the blooms to attract pollinators.






# General Facts about Growing Herbs

## Harvesting:

 When harvesting leafy herbs such as basil, thyme and oregano, you should harvest before they flower, once they flower this can reduce the leaf production and flavor.

 When pruning for continued bloom, flowers should be harvested on a regular basis. Some herbs like tarragon and lavender can be sheared in early summer and then sheared to half their height to encourage a second flowering period in the fall.



# Herbs Grown in Containers



This has become a very popular way to grow an herb garden for several reasons



You can grow different herbs in one pot that can be used in many ways or as a themed pot : ex: hot and spicy, spaghetti/pizza, etc.



You can keep some of the quick spreaders from taking over your garden. Ex: Mint



They can be grown practically anywhere in pots.



And the biggest reason is that most herbs love to be grown in containers!!!





Herbs can be used for either medicinal, culinary or aromatic purposes.

Herb gardens have been around for over 4,000 years.

*Ginger (*Zingiber officinale*) is one of the oldest known herbs.*

*The use of herbs has evolved from curing the sick, fumigating buildings with incense and perfuming the body or using them in process of embalming the dead, to being grown for landscape value, culinary uses, dietary supplements, and the list goes on and on.*



There are Herbs, Spices and flavorings

Herbs – Refers to the aromatic leafy parts



Spices – refer to the pungent seeds, roots, and bark

Flavorings – refer to the commodities that are used the same way that herbs and spices are but they are actually foods, such as coffee, chocolate, nuts etc.

Herbs that are used for culinary purposes are what makes a regional dish unique



♥ I love herbs ♥



Another classification is the Salad Herb  
Or the  
“Potherb”

This includes waterCress, sorrel,  
dandelion, arugula and Chicory.

Not only are these used in salads, but  
they can also be added to soups or stews.





☺ Herbs can also add color to our dishes and liven them up. A light color soup can be made more appetizing with few flecks of parsley added.

☺ Another added bonus of herbs is the boost they give to the Vitamin and mineral Content of our foods.

☺ Rosemary, purslane and green tea are said to be rich in antioxidants, which help maintain vitality and slow the aging process.



When cooking with fresh herbs, you want to use the freshest ones possible. The aromatic essential oils evaporate readily so it is best to grow your own herbs or buy the freshest you can find and cut up or grind them in small amounts as needed.



When you substitute fresh herbs in a recipe,  
remember that 3 teaspoons (1  
tablespoon) of fresh herbs is equal to 1  
teaspoon of dried, crushed herbs.

1 teaspoon of dried, crushed herbs is equal  
to  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon of powdered herbs.





When should your herbs  
and spices be added to  
your dishes?



Powdered herbs and spices flavor is released immediately, so you should wait until your dishes are within 15 minutes of being done before adding them.

Whole spices should be added when you first put a dish on to cook so they will have time for their flavor to be fully extracted during simmering.



## Herbs make a great salt substitute

They not only can help decrease your salt intake and lower your blood pressure, but they will also add a flair to the taste of certain dishes to give them a one of a kind flavor.

Some examples of salt substitutes in common beverages or foods are:

Tomato Juice – use dill, oregano, tarragon, or lemon or lime juice.

Cottage Cheese – try chives or sage.

Eggs – use basil, dill weed, rosemary or thyme.





## Herb and Spice Guide

**Basil** – Peppery, sweet, with a hint of clove.  
Sample uses – pesto, vegetable soup and tomato salads.

**Bay Leaf** – Strong, pungent flavor with a woody aroma.  
Sample uses - beef stew, pot roast and gravies.

**Chives** – Mild, oniony  
Sample uses – dips, mashed potatoes and egg dishes.

**Cilantro** – Grassy scent with a citrusy pungent flavor.  
Sample uses – Asian soups, chutneys, salsas



**Dill** - light and fresh, with a faint anise taste.

Sample uses – salmon, boiled potatoes, beets.



**Lavender** – sweet and floral.

Sample uses – Cakes and icings, ice cream.

**Lemongrass** – Citrusy, lemon like scent.

Sample uses – Asian soups and stews, curries.

**Mint** – Refreshing cool, sweet.

Sample uses – lamb dishes, iced tea, green peas, fruit salad.



**Oregano** – assertive, peppery.

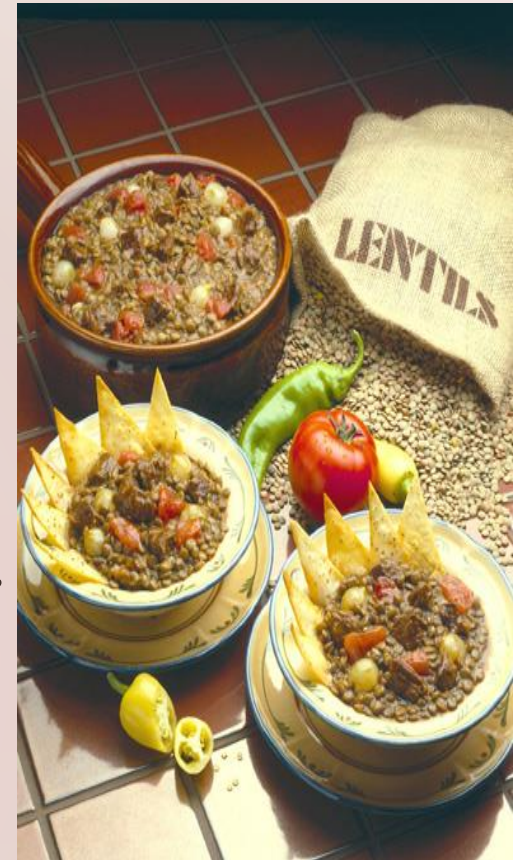
Sample uses – garlic bread, Italian tomato sauce, chili, Greek salads, grilled fish.

**Parsley** – Grassy and fresh flavor.

Sample uses – boiled potatoes, cold soups, tabbouleh.

**Rosemary** – strong, sweet, with a piney fragrance.

Sample uses – leg of lamb, roasted potatoes, poultry, split pea and bean soups.





**Sage** – woody, faintly bitter.

Sample uses – roast chicken and pork, risotto.

**Tarragon** – Strong and tart with a suggestion of licorice.

Sample uses – roast or sautéed chicken, omelets, in sauce for fish or lobster.

**Thyme** – pungent, warm, traces of lemon and mint.

Sample uses – tomato soups, casseroles, and poultry stuffing.



Rosemary

Sage

# Questions??

Basil

Cilantro

Oregano

[lori.bowling@uky.edu](mailto:lori.bowling@uky.edu)

(606) 739-5184