



## Culinary Herbs – Easy to Grow, Delicious and Nutritious

Nancy McDonald, Master Gardener

### Why grow culinary herbs?

Easy to grow, relatively pest free, attract beneficial insects, opportunities to harvest & preserve, health benefits, economical use of garden space

Herb	Propagate	Culture	Preserving /Uses
Basil - many varieties	Seed, plants	Rich, well-drained	Freeze (blanch), paste – Recipe idea: Dark ‘Opal ‘Basil Jelly- <a href="http://back2basichealth.blogspot.ca/2012/02/dark-opal-basil-jelly-from-grow-great.html">http://back2basichealth.blogspot.ca/2012/02/dark-opal-basil-jelly-from-grow-great.html</a>
Bay	Plants	Sun, part sun (plants grown in pots do best when protected from extreme sun). Prune/fertilize in spring	Move pot indoors for winter. Drying leaves will intensify flavour. Add to slow cooking meals.
Chives	Division of bulbs, seeds	Full sun to part shade, rich, moist soil	Freeze, paste, vinegars, butters, mustards. Flowers can be used in salads & on soup.
Cilantro, Coriander	Seed, plants	Full sun, lean soil	Cilantro leaves- freeze, paste, Cilantro flowers- add to salads, soups, Coriander – seeds, dry
Dill	Seed	Sun, rich soil	Dry, freeze or paste – let some plants develop mature seeds
Lavender	Cuttings, divisions, plants	Full sun, lean soil	Dry
Lemon Balm (prolific)	Seed, plants	Part shade, sun, moist, well-drained	Dry, can store fresh leaves in refrigerator, can chop & freeze in water in ice cube trays
Lemon Verbena -grow 1 plant in 12” pot	Cuttings, plant	Sun, good drainage	Dry, used in teas, desserts and jellies
Lovage	Seed, plants	Sun, part shade, rich, moist, well-drained	Dry or freeze (I freeze stems & leaves).

Mint – many varieties	Cuttings, divisions, plants	Spearmint – savoury dishes – Full sun, lean dry soil Peppermint – desserts – Part shade, moist soil	Dry, freeze or paste
Oregano	Seeds, cuttings, divisions, plants	Sun, lean soil, well drained	Dry, freeze, paste
Parsley	Seed, plants	Sun, part sun, medium rich soil	Freeze, paste
Rosemary, <i>Salvia rosmarinus</i>	Seed (slow), cuttings, plant	Full sun, protect from wind, well drained, lean soil	Overwinter inside, can dry, freeze or make paste of leaves
Sage	Seed (slow) Cuttings, layering, plant	Sun, well drained soil. Prune stems by 1/3 in spring.	Dry, freeze, paste
Savory (annual & perennial)	Seed	Full sun, well-drained soil	Dry or freeze
Sweet Cicely	Seed, Plant	Full sun, part shade, prefers deep, rich moist soil	One recommendation is to press/roll bunches of sweet cicely together (herbal cigar) & then wrap in aluminum foil & freeze; then peel back foil & shave off amount of leaves you want. Leaves can be dried.
Tarragon	Division of root crowns, plant	Sun, rich, well drained soil	Freeze, paste
Thyme	Seed, cuttings, plant	Sun, well drained	Dry, freeze, paste

Some recipes I have used:

**Paste recipe:** 2 cups (500 ml) of packed herb leaves with ½ cup of olive or vegetable oil (adding garlic cloves is optional. Purée together & spoon into ice cube trays to freeze.

**Herb Butter:** Soften unsalted butter, use 4 parts butter, 2 parts herb and ½ part lemon juice. Freezes nicely.

**Good herbs for salts:** Chives, oregano, rosemary, tarragon, thyme

**Scarborough Fair Seasoned Salt:** 4 Tbsp. parsley, 3Tbsp. sage, 2 Tbsp. rosemary, 1 Tbsp. thyme to one cup of salt.

[Growing and preserving herbs plus Sweet Cicely Tea Biscuits and Rosemary Honey recipes in The Edible Garden](http://www.mgottawa.ca/media/TEG_March2015.pdf) [http://www.mgottawa.ca/media/TEG\\_March2015.pdf](http://www.mgottawa.ca/media/TEG_March2015.pdf)

**Good herbs for sugars:** Lavender, mint, lemon basil

Many excellent online sites for other herb recipes.

Lois Hole: *Herbs and Edible Flowers, Gardening for the Kitchen* (2000)

Ruth Lively: *Taunton's Complete Guide to Growing Vegetables and Herbs* (2011)

Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, food and Rural Affairs: [www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/](http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/)