



Chives



Rosemary



Thyme



Sage



Parsley

## Herbs for all seasons ...

### Getting started -

With Spring upon us what better time to get excited about your garden. A simple herb garden is a good start to get anyone enthusiastic, as herbs are so easy to grow, require little time and the benefits are many. Whether grown simply for ornamental purposes, for use in the kitchen or even as medicinal aids, herbs are essential in everyone's garden.

If you are a beginner, start off with the 'must haves' that are tried and true .... Mint, Oregano, Parsley, Rosemary, Sage and Thyme. These are permanent plants that can be used virtually all year round and there is no better reward than picking fresh herbs from your own garden to use in cooking or add to your bath !

### Where ? -

Herbs require full sun to do their best. Choose an open sunny spot, preferably near the kitchen for easy snipping and picking. The size of your herb garden will really depend on what space you have available, how keen you are to grow different herbs and how often you will be using them. If space is lacking, a collection of pots or even a window box will still provide a generous return.

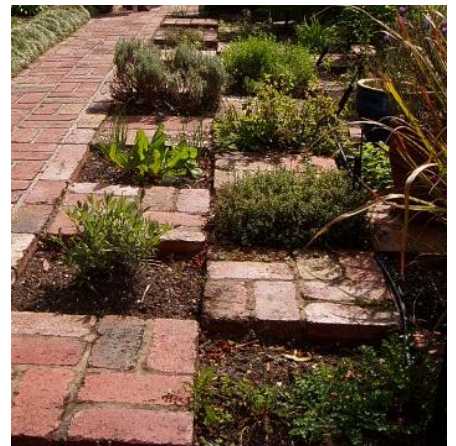
### Design -

You can certainly plant herbs amongst other garden plants, filling spaces where required however. consider having a dedicated area just for herbs. I have briefly outline three popular design for herbs gardens.

If you have the area available, consider a traditional circle or wheel - 3m in diameter with herbs grown in wedge shapes with a feature plant grown in the centre for example a standard Bay or Cumquat.

Another option would be a border garden – two rows of pavers or bricks with random pavers replaced by herbs. This makes walking amongst herbs easy and contains herbs to their own area.

A dedicated herb 'room' is another way to get the full benefit of herbs. A perfumed, decorative garden completely bordered by lavender with an entry gate or arbour at one end. Whether it be a square or rectangle, be sure to allow room for a bench seat or small dining setting so you sit and inhale all the sensory delights.



## Preparation -

Like all plants the soil needs to be prepared. One of the greatest myths about growing Herbs is that they will grow in almost any soil. They are like all plants and prefer a nice healthy, loose or friable soil. Good drainage is an absolute must. It's easiest to improve your soil, preferably with compost, before the garden is planted as most herbs prefer a neutral to slightly alkaline soil and compost can help to regulate this. Like any other plant once planted, water well and mulch the ground around the plant to suppress weeds and to retain moisture. If planting in pots buy the best potting mix you can afford preferably with the Australian Standard 'ticks'.


The list is endless however, adding to the 'must haves' above, here are a few popular herbs to plant to complement your cooking ...

- **Basil** – plant seedlings in Summer – enhances any tomato dish, terrific for fresh pesto and a must in summer pasta sauces. Plant new seedlings annually.
- **Chives** – plant seedlings in Spring – consider a chive border, as once planted they flower annually - great in dips, potatoes and with tomatoes
- **Coriander** – sow seeds or plant seedlings in Autumn and Spring – goes to seed quickly in the very hot weather so more suited to the cooler months – great in Mexican and Asian dishes
- **Mint** - a very aggressive plant that can quickly take over the garden so grow in a container and water well in summer. Add to carrots, fruit salads, parsley, peas, tabouli and tea
- **Oregano** – plant out anytime for a permanent herb – complements capsicum and tomatoes
- **Parsley** - The curly leaf is the most common, but the flat-leaf or Italian parsley is more strongly flavored and often preferred for cooking. Natural for parsley include potato salad and tabouli
- **Rosemary** – an essential in any garden. Clip into spheres for a decorative effect – add to chicken, fish, lamb, pork, roasted potatoes, soups, stews and tomatoes
- **Sage** - another permanent herb perfect with poultry seasoning and stuffings
- **Thyme** – with many varieties to choose from, grow several as groundcovers. Great with eggs, potatoes, poultry and tomatoes



Whether it's a mixed pot on the window ledge or a full scale garden bed, herbs will enrich your life with fragrance, flavour, beauty and pleasure.

Happy gardening ... Helen

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