

Culinary Herb Info

Backyard Heirloom Seeds & Herbs

Tip: Use brown bags or baggies and rubber band over drying blooms to catch seeds from falling while drying & harvesting seeds.

Also, Seeds are living plants and need to be stored properly for long term storage. The freezer is a good idea if you plan to store longer than one planting season. A sealed bag in a rigid sealed container in a cool, dark, humidity free area will work short term.

Anise

Annual. 75 days. Use licorice flavored leaves in salads, and the seeds to flavor applesauce, cakes, confections and liquors. Grows to about 18 inches tall with finely serrated leaves, topped by umbels of white blossoms. Wonderfully fragrant.

Planting: Sow the seed in dry, light soil, on a warm, sunny border, early in April, where the plants are to remain. When seeds come up, thin them and keep them clean from weeds. Allow about a foot each way. The seeds may also be sown in pots indoors and removed to a warm site in May

Growing: The seeds will ripen in cool climate areas (in good seasons) if planted in a warm and favorable situation, though they are not successful everywhere.

Harvesting: The plant flowers in July, and if the season proves warm, will ripen in autumn, when the plants are cut down and the seeds threshed out. The fruit/seeds may be easily dried in trays, in a current of air in half-shade, out-of-doors, or by moderate heat. When dry, they are grayish brown, ovate, hairy, about one-fifth of an inch long, with ten crenate ribs and often have the stalk attached. They should be free from earthy matter. The taste is sweet and spicy, and the odor aromatic and agreeable.

Arugula-Slow Bolt

43 days. An easily grown green that adds a tangy, peppery flavor to salads. Plant in the spring and again in the fall. Use only young leaves when about 2 to 3 inches long.

Planting: Start seeds indoors 3 to 4 weeks before last frost. They should germinate in 3 to 4 days at 40 to 55 degrees F.

Growing: When the seedlings are 4 weeks old, transplant them into rows about 18 inches apart, in full sun to dappled shade and loose, rich soil.

Harvesting: Pinch off for use when leaves are tender.

Basil-Genovese

An intensely scented strain of sweet basil, with slightly hairy leaves and purple flowers. Excellent fresh market basil growing in popularity.

Planting: Basil is very easy to grow. They prefer full sun. They do well in average soils and tolerate dry soil conditions. Space seedlings or thin plants to 10" apart, in rows two feet apart. Some gardeners will grow just a few plants in clumps. They will tolerate a little crowding.

Growing: Water them during dry periods, at least once a week. Add a general purpose fertilizer once or twice a season.

Harvesting: Harvest leaves and stems. Rinse well, and then dry in a cool, dry place. Make sure they are completely dried before storing. Or, you can freeze basil for later use.

Basil- Licorice

Also known as Anise basil or Persian basil, silvery leaves, spicy licorice smell and a flavor reminiscent of tarragon. (see above)

Basil- Lime

Annual. Distinct zesty aroma of lime. Adds a unique citrus flair to fish and salads. Compact plant has 2" long, bright green leaves. Height in the garden is 16-20 inches. (see above)

Caraway

Biennial. 70 days. Plant has fine, carrot-like foliage and white flowers that appear the second year. Seeds are used in breads, soups, cheese and liquors. Leaves are used in salads and soups. The roots and young leaves can be eaten as a vegetable, raw or boiled.

Planting: Best when planted in the fall though it may be sown in March. Ht. 24 in. Direct sow, 1 foot apart. When the plants when strong enough, thin out to about 8 inches in the rows.

Growing: The ground will require hoeing to keep it clean and assist the growth of the plants.

Harvesting: From an autumn-sown crop, seeds will be produced in the following summer, ripening about August. When the fruit ripens, the plant is cut and the Caraways are separated by threshing. They can be

dried either on trays in the sun or by very gentle heat over a stove, shaking occasionally.

Chamomile- Roman (wild)

Perennial. Traditional ground cover in English gardens and pathways. Small white daisy-like flowers. Can handle some foot traffic and even be mown. The fresh plant is strongly and agreeably aromatic, with a distinct scent of apples. Good for Tea and used for centuries for many medicinal purposes.

Planting: R.C. flourishes in a rather dry, sandy soil, the conditions of its natural habits on wild. Propagation may be effective by seed, sown thinly in May in the open and transplanting when the seedlings are large enough to move to permanent quarters.

Growing: The fruit is small and dry, and as it forms, the hill of the plant gets more and more conical. The whole plant is downy and grayish green in color. Small flies are the chief insect-visitors to the flowers. The old plants are divided up into their sets in March and a new plantation formed in well-mannered soil, in rows 2 1/2 feet apart, with a distance of 18 inches between the plants. Tread the small plants in firmly, it will not hurt them, but make them root better. Keep them clean during the summer by hand-weeding, as hoeing is apt to destroy such little plants. In autumn, the sets may be more readily rooted by placing a ring of good light soil about 2 or 3 inches from the centre of the old plant and pressing it down slightly.

Harvesting: They will require no further attention until the flowers are expanded and the "well worth it" somewhat tedious process of picking and drying the small flower heads begins.

Chervil

Annual. 60 days. Finely cut curled leaves. Parsley-like flavor with a hint of tarragon. Use for soups, egg dishes, fish and sauces. Aromatic leaves. Best to crop in spring and fall. Likes partial shade. Ht. 12 inches

Planting: Chervil is an herb with a delicate anisette flavor that compliments many foods, and is often used as a seasoning for fish. It is also tasty added to salads. Chervil grows best in cool weather, so should be planted in early spring or in late summer for a fall crop. Chervil does not transplant well, so it is best to plant it right out in the herb or vegetable garden. Chervil seed needs light and moisture to germinate, conditions which can be a challenge to provide. The best way is to make a shallow furrow about an inch deep, and press the seeds into the bottom.

Growing: Mist or gently water the seed bed frequently until the seedlings emerge. Once the plants are a few inches tall, mulch to provide the cool moist soil that the plant appreciates. Plants started in the fall will usually survive the winter to provide an early spring crop.

Harvesting: Chervil seeds do not store well, so it is best to start out with fresh seed each season. The mild flavored leaves do not stand up well to drying, so this is one herb that is best used fresh.

Chives -Onion & Garlic Chives

Perennial. Narrow, grass-like leaves have mild onion-like flavor. The flowering stem is usually nipped off with cultivated plants (which are grown solely for the sake of the leaves, or 'grass'), but when allowed to rise, it seldom reaches more than a few inches to at most a foot in height.

Planting: The Chive will grow in any ordinary garden soil by seed in Spring -after all chance of frost or indoors in a large pot. Usually propagated after first year by dividing the clumps in spring or autumn.

Growing: The bulbs grow very close together in dense tufts or clusters-if transplanting from an indoor pot plant entire tuft into well worked garden. The slender leaves appear early in spring. They grow from 6 to 10 inches high.

Harvesting: The seed- capsule is completely concealed within the flower petals-rose color when dry. The flowers are in blossom in June and July, and in the most cold and moist situations will mature their seeds, though rarely allowed to do so under cultivation.

Chives- Garlic

Perennial. Chinese leeks. 85 days. Resembles regular chives, but leaves are flat. Mild garlic flavor. Delicious in sauces and soups. Attractive umbels of delicate white flowers. Ht. 12 in (see above)

Cilantro-Slow Bolt

Annual. This slow-bolting strain is grown primarily for it's broad, deep green, celery-like, pungent foliage. Used in Oriental and Mexican cuisine. Use seed to flavor meats, pickles and baked goods. Ht. 24 in. The plant is called Cilantro, while the seeds are called Coriander.

Planting: Directly sow seeds into your garden after all danger of frost. Cover lightly with fine garden soil. For a jump start, sow a few seeds indoors in containers for transplanting later. Space seedlings or thin plants

to 6" apart, in rows two feet apart. They will tolerate a little crowding.

Growing: Cilantro grows well in full to partial sun and a well drained soil. They will do well in almost any soil, and is tolerant dry soil conditions. Water them during dry periods, once or twice per week. Add a general purpose fertilizer once or twice a season.

Harvesting: Harvest flower heads after seeds have formed and the flower head has died. Extract seeds and dry them in a cool, dry location. Harvest the Coriander seeds in the second year, after the flower head has died. Cut the stems and tie together. Hang them in a cool, dry place to dry out. Make sure to place a container under them to capture falling seeds. When dry, place flower heads in a bag and shake to harvest seeds. Make sure seeds are completely dry before storing.

Cress- Upland

Annual. 50 days. Pick leaves individually as they become about 4-5 inches high or harvest the entire plant. Leaves may be cooked as greens or used raw. Peppery flavor adds sparkle to in salads, sandwiches or use as a garnish. Also called winter cress or "Creasy Greens in the South, this cut-and-come-again crop is similar to watercress but much easier to grow.

Planting: The upland cress crops are sown about the middle of August when the soil is moist. These crops are usually harvested from January to March. The seed should be planted ¹/₂ inch deep in soil of average texture. The depth of planting should be a little greater in sandy soils and a little less in heavy clay loams.

Growing: A spacing of from 3 to 6 inches apart in the row is desirable. Shallow cultivation between rows will control weeds until cold weather retards their growth.

Harvesting: Upland cress is nearly always eaten as a cooked green like spinach or kale; however, in some areas it is frequently eaten raw as a salad or garnish. Cut the entire plant when large enough.

Dill -Bouquet

Annual. 65 days. 3 ft. plant with strongly aromatic foliage, stems, and heads. Good for dill weed and for seeds. Good for pickling

Planting: Plant from seed in Spring after all chance of frost.

Growing: Thin out seedlings leaving 8-10 inches of room per plant. Keep weeded.

Harvesting: In dry periods, cutting is best done in early morning or late evening, care being taken to handle with the least possible shaking to prevent loss. The loose sheaves are built into stacks or sheaves, tied together. In hot weather, threshing may be done in the yard, spreading the sheaves on a large canvas sheet and beating out. Use fresh or dry seeds by spreading out on trays in the sun, or for a short time over the moderate heat of a stove, shaking occasionally.

Fenugreek

Annual. Seeds have nutty flavor that can be used whole or ground in meats, poultry, marinated vegetables, and curry blends, or to make a tea to soothe a sore throat. Used to flavor maple syrup. Small leaves are used sparingly as a spicy salad addition. In Egyptian medicine, soaking the seeds in water till they swell into a thick paste is said to be equal to quinine in preventing fevers & is comforting to the stomach, utilized for diabetes & substituted for cod-liver oil. (mix with jelly) It is found to actually enhance the disinfectant properties of garlic and will cause a lymphatic system cleansing healthy sweat. Also, Cattle love the flavor.

Germination: germinating in 2-7 days. Soak in warm water 1 hr. to help with sprouting.

Planting: Plant in spring/ summer, to early autumn, full sun, in well limed soil in the garden or large pots.

Growing: Leaves of young plants are very tasty, resembling the flavor of fresh peas

Harvesting: The seed pods are ready when yellow-pick before they split open. Each contains ten to twenty seeds together, in long, narrow, sickle-like pods.

Florence Fennel

Annual. Often listed with the herbs (as here) this strain is really the vegetable fennel raised for the overlapping thickened leaf stalks which form a bulb at the base of the plant. Use bulb raw in salads or steamed, stir-fired, braised or baked. Use the fern-like tops as a fresh or dried herb to add a licorice-like flavor to foods or tea. Ht 36 in. It has Excellent medicinal purposes! Slimming & detoxifying herb.

Planting: It is easily propagated by seeds, sown early in April in ordinary soil. It likes sun and does, not need heavily composted ground, though it will yield more on rich stiff soil. The rows and the plants may be

placed closer together, the seedlings only 6 to 8 inches apart.

Growing: Fennel is a very thirsty plant and requires watering frequently in dry weather. When the 'tubers' swell and attain the size of an egg, draw the soil slightly around them, half covering them. Cutting may begin about ten days later.

Harvesting: For family use, 1/2 oz. of seed will produce an ample supply of plants for several years, either from the established roots, or by self re-seeding. Collect and dry seeds for house hold use.

Lavender Lady (English)

2 feet tall. Fragrant leaves and blossoms for sachets and potpourri. Hardy plants with aromatic lavender blue flower spikes are lovely in borders in sunny, well-drained soils. Wonderful garden additions.

Germination: 30 days at 34 F then 21 days 70 F

Planting: may be grown from seed, sown in April- avoid frost.

Growing: Young plants should as far as possible be kept from flowering during the first year by clipping, so that the strength of the plant is thrown into the lateral shoots to make it bushy and compact. A full picking is usually obtained from the second to the fifth year. After the third year, the bushes are apt to become straggly. They can be pruned in March and care should be taken to always have young plants ready to follow on, to take the place of exhausted, over-straggly bushes. Also, propagated by cuttings root freely in April (young growths) and frequent watering until the cuttings are thoroughly established.

Harvesting: cut flowers in bunches and dry upside down over paper bag.

Marjoram- Sweet

Annual. 70 days. Pungent leaves and young stem tips, used fresh or dried for flavoring meats, poultry, soups, dressings and salads. Bushy plants to 24 inches tall

Planting: Seeds may be sown early in March, on a gentle hot-bed and again, in a warm position, in light soil, or on open ground during April. Plants do well if sown in April, though they are long in germinating.

Growing: Pinch back stems for a bushier plant. Use the leaves anytime. Sweet Marjoram grows quickly.

Harvest stems and leaves when flowers appear for the best flavor. Cut the plant down with a knife allowing 4 inches to remain. The plant continues growing for a second harvest.

Harvesting: The stems are cut about 4 inches from the ground and dried and the leaves separated from the stems. Drying in the shade obtains more aromas.

Mint- Lemon

Annual. Used to flavor teas and other drinks as well as candies and confections. The leaves have a mild but distinct combination of lemon and mint. Attractive flowers are often dried. Both leaves and flowers are used in Pot-Pori. Also called purple horse mint or lemon bee balm.

Planting: A moist situation is preferable, but mint will succeed in almost any soil when once started into growth, though in dry, sandy soils it is sometimes difficult to grow, and should be planted in the coolest and dampest situations. Direct sow outdoors in fall or winter sow in vented containers indoors.

Growing: Use leaves any time for tea or culinary use.

Harvesting: When the plants are breaking into bloom, the stalks should be cut a few inches above the root, on a dry day, after the dew has disappeared, and before the hot sun has taken any oil from the leaves, and dried for culinary use for the winter. Allow seed heads to dry on plants; bag and carefully remove and collect seeds for the next year. Unlike most perennial mints, lemon mint is an annual.

Oregano- Italian Perennial. 90 days. Hardy 2½ inch plant with pungent, oval leaves and purplish pink flowers. Use fresh or dried in sauces and soups

Planting: If you're planting seeds, you can start them indoors in small seed pots a few weeks before the last frost of winter. Just sprinkle the seeds over your soil without covering them and give them a good mist of water. Let them sit in a sunny window until they germinate, about five to seven days. Transplant after frost.

Growing: Plant oregano in full sun and well-drained soil, about ten to twelve inches apart. These herbs don't mind a dry soil and will actually adapt to most planting conditions as long as they get lots of sunshine. Water your oregano plants only during very dry periods. Don't fertilize- herb loses flavor. As the plants begin to flower, pinch off the flower buds. This will allow the plants to grow a bit bushy and provide optimum flavor. The plants can grow quite wide as they creep along the ground, so scale the leaves and stems back as needed

Harvesting: Begin harvesting at about 4 inches. At the end of the growing season, cut back your oregano plants and cover the area with mulch. They should last anywhere from two to four years, at which time they

will start to get woody and need to be replaced. Use fresh, freeze or dry the herb-pick in early morning.

Parsley- Italian Flat-leaf

Annual. 72 days. The flat leaf parsley has a stronger flavor than the curled varieties, and is generally preferred for cooking. Broad, dark green leaves may be cut repeatedly. Used fresh or dried. Ht. 6-8 in
Planting: Direct sow and tamp down, thin when seedlings are large enough. Don't crowd. Parsley requires an ordinary, good well-worked soil, but a moist shaded position is best. A little soot may be added to the soil.

Growing: For a continuous supply, three sowings should be made: as early in February as the weather permits, in April or early in May, and in July and early August - the last being for the winter supply, in a sheltered position, with a southern exposure. Sow in February for the summer crop and for drying purposes. Seed sown then, however, takes several weeks to germinate, often as much as a full month. The principal sowing is generally done in April; it then germinates more quickly and provides useful material for cutting throughout the summer. A mid-August sowing will furnish good plants for cold frame winter use.

Harvesting: Soon after the old or last year's plants begin to grow again in the spring, they run to flower, but if the flower stems are promptly removed, and the plants top dressed and watered, they will remain productive for some time longer. OR save the seed for new plantings.

Parsley Triple Moss Curled

Annual. 70 days. Finely cut, deeply curled leaves that are dark green. More decorative than the flat leaf varieties, use this parsley for garnishing, and culinary decoration. Good heat tolerance less winter hardy. (see above)

Rosemary

This ornamental evergreen herb forms a small shrub that adapts well to pot culture. Two foot plants with needle-like leaves. Use fresh or dried on poultry, meats and sea food. Sow heavily as germination is often less than 50% and pamper at first. Give winter protection in cold areas.

Germination: The seed is hard to start. Soak the seeds in water a few hours before planting. We recommend starting it indoors on propagation mats to improve germination success. Start them indoors six weeks before the last frost. If you want to grow and enjoy them as houseplants, start them indoors even earlier.

Planting: After they sprout, place them in a warm, sunny window. When transplanting outdoors, space plants three feet or more apart. In warm areas where there is no frost or freezes, pick a place where you want it to grow for many years.

Growing: Rosemary succeeds best in a light, rather dry soil, and in a sheltered situation, such as the base of a low wall with a south aspect.

Harvesting: The leaves are used fresh, dried, or frozen in many recipes. It commonly is used on meats (beef, chicken, and ribs), stews, sauces, and soups. Brew some fresh for tea!

Summer Savory

Annual. 60 days. Bushy plant with delicate leaves and lavender-pink flowers. Use fragrant leaves, fresh or dried, for flavoring dressings, gravy, or fresh in salads. Especially good in bean dishes. Ht 12-18"

Planting: Plant the seeds about a 1/2 inch deep. Space the seeds at least 3 inches apart and separate the summer savory rows by 3 feet and away from other plants-will re seed if enough room to grow is provided. Cover with a loose top layer of soil. Water the plant occasionally. Make sure that the soil is well drained

Growing: Snip off the leaves and use them any time during the growing season. When the summer savory blooms, start by taking the top 6 inches of the plant for harvest. Provide support for the stems if needed.

Harvesting: You may need to put up stakes if the stems begin to flop over. Harvest all leaves when the flowers of the plant bloom. This is a sign that it is time to dry out all of the summer savory and cut the entire plant down.

Tarragon- Russian

Perennial. 2 foot plant with aromatic leaves that are used to flavor poultry, vinegar, fish, mayo, Dijon mustard, eggs, salads, and salad dressings.

Planting: It needs full sun. They prefer dry, rocky or gravel or sandy soil- warm, dry environment day and night. Start seedlings indoors well before the last frost in your area.

Growing: Transplant seedlings outdoors when the weather warms, spacing them 1 1/2 to 2 feet apart. Once started, these plants will grow well with little or no attention.

Harvesting: Harvest and dry the leaves and flowers. Store them in a cool, dry place or freeze.

Thyme

Perennial. 85 days. Woody plant spreads to form attractive 8 to 12 inch high mounds. Aromatic leaves used to flavor meats, dressings, soups, and stews

Planting: Thyme is grown from seed. Start them indoors six weeks before the last frost. Give seedlings plenty of sun. You can also sow seeds directly into the garden. Cover lightly with fine garden soil. Space seeds or seedlings 8" apart

Growing: Make sure to put this perennial somewhere in the garden where it can live for several years without the need to replant it. Water them during dry periods, once or twice per week. Add a general purpose fertilizer once or twice a season.

Harvesting: Cut leaves and dry them in a cool, shady place **Tip:** The flowers are like magnets to bees. Set containers away from the patio door

Cumin

A native of Egypt, its hot and spicy flavor is also popular in Indian and Indonesian recipes. It takes 4 months to develop mature seeds so start the plants early in a hothouse or cold frame. Do not disturb roots when transplanting; needs shelter from cool breezes. Harvest when seed heads start to change color and hang upside down to dry. G@75°F~1 week. Tender