

Growing Herbs

Adding your own fresh herbs to a recipe is one of the great joys of gardening. As a group, herbs are relatively easy to grow, either from seed or by purchasing young plants. Begin your herb garden with the herbs you enjoy the most. When growing herbs, follow these basic guidelines:

- * Plant in average garden soil amended with organic material, such as Bumper Crop, which will improve the texture and drainage of the bed.
- * Choose a site that will receive at least 6 to 8 hours of direct sunlight daily. Some herbs will grow in partial shade, but most need lots of sun.
- * Avoid ground where water stands or runs during heavy rains - excellent drainage is critical for growing the majority of herbs.
- * Allow ample space between plants to allow good circulation. Herbs stay healthier and look better if they are not crowded.
- * Fertilize sparingly - herbs are not heavy feeders. Apply inorganic fertilizers once in midsummer.
- * Allow the bed to dry slightly between watering. Water thoroughly by soaking the soil to a depth of approximately 6 to 8 inches.
- * Use 1 to 2 inches of mulch around the plants to maintain moisture in the soil and to protect perennial herbs in the winter.

Johnson's carries a large variety of these and other popular herbs for your use:

Basil: An annual herb that thrives in high temperatures and low moisture when established. Pinch the growing tips frequently to ensure a bushy plant.

Cilantro/Coriander: An annual herb that will grow in a semi-shady spot. Cut the leaves when they are 4 to 6 inches in length and they will produce a second cutting.

Chives: A hardy perennial that produces edible pink flowers. Encourage new growth by cutting close to the base.

Dill: A cool weather annual that is easy to grow from seed. It will begin to decline with the onset of hot weather.

Mint: A hardy perennial which is a great plant to keep contained in a pot. The flowers should be removed prior to seed formation. Trim heavily mid-season to retain vigor. Grows in shade.

Oregano: A hardy perennial with white or pink flowers

that's easy to grow from seed. Unlike most herbs, the leaves are best used dried.

Rosemary: A tender perennial with many different cultivars that vary in size, shape, and even flavor. All grow best in dry, sunny areas.

Parsley: A marginally hardy biennial producing leaves the first year and flowers the next. Grow parsley in light shade with rich, moist soil.

Sage: A hardy perennial easily grown from seed. If left to flower, it will produce blooms that attract butterflies. Sage requires excellent drainage and dry soil.

Thyme: Numerous varieties available, but the taller species and those with smooth leaves will tolerate heat and humidity better than low growing or wooly types. Plant in a dry area.

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