



HYANNIS
COUNTRY GARDEN

Tips for Growing Herbs

Full Sun! Herbs grow best when they are getting at least five hours of direct sun, including the noon hour. If you don't have a sunny space for a large herb garden, consider growing them in pots or in with shrubs and perennials.

Herbs like good drainage. They tend to be more flavorful when grown in drier, leaner soil, so don't over-fertilize or water too frequently. Amend areas of pure sand sparingly with compost, and Flower-tone fertilizer.

Plant mint in pots so that it won't take over your garden spaces. One small mint plant will fill a pot by mid-summer.

Greek oregano and lemon balm are also aggressive: grow it in pots, or in a location with poor soil. (In poor, dry soils these plants won't be as vigorous.)

Annual and Perennial

The following herbs are reliably perennial on Cape Cod: thyme, culinary sage, chives, oregano, lemon balm, lovage, lavender and mint. Rosemary can sometimes make it through the winter but it's not a given.

The following herbs need to be planted every spring: basil, dill, parsley, cilantro, French tarragon, lemon grass, borage, & lemon verbena. Fennel, dill, and cilantro often self-seeds. (Parsley, a biennial, may return briefly in spring but quickly goes into flower. Plant new parsley every spring.) Variegated or purple sage, and variegated lavender, should be treated as annuals on Cape Cod.)

Preserving: You can dry herbs, but they retain more of their fresh flavors when frozen. Wash them and spin or let dry on a clean dishtowel. Chop and freeze in plastic freezer bags. You can also make any herbs into a pesto, as you would basil, by combining with oil in a blender or food processor. Drop by tablespoon onto a waxed paper lined cookie sheet and freeze. Once frozen, place those in a plastic freezer bag until needed for cooking.

Rosemary: If you grow rosemary in a pot, it can be over-wintered indoors by a sunny window. The variety called Salem (aka Roasting Rosemary) is most tolerant of indoor conditions. Do not let an indoor rosemary dry out.