

GROWING HERBS INDOORS

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Herbs Require Sun

Herbs need sun, lots of it. Most herbs require at least six hours of sun per day outdoors. Indoors, much less light gets in, especially in the winter. So be sure you can place your herbs in a sunny spot. If the sun won't cooperate, you can also choose to supplement the sun with a grow lamp that can shine on your herbs for up to 12 hours a day.

Plant Your Herbs in Quality Soil

Herbs need lots of nutrients, oxygen and moisture all the way down at the root level. Always use a quality potting mix that will allow for proper airflow and drainage so your herbs can root deeply and thrive.

Purchase Plants is One Option

Purchasing plants from a grower means you can quickly begin harvesting. If you planted your herbs outdoors and now want to move them indoors, take it slow. Herbs taken straight from an outdoor sunny spot to an indoor spot can go into a light-deprivation shock. Help herbs adjust by gradually acclimating them to lower light levels. Move them from full sun to a spot that receives partial sun for two weeks, then to deeper shade for another one to two weeks before moving them indoors.

Growing Your Herbs from Seeds

If growing from seed, look for newer varieties that are dense and compact, since they are more likely to grow better in containers. Plant seeds no deeper than $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch deep. Cover the container with a plastic dome or bag, and place in a warm spot out of direct sunlight so your seeds stay warm until they germinate. Once you see your seeds start to pop up through the soil, remove the plastic cover and move to a sunny location.

Watering and Feeding Your Herbs

Yes, your plants need water to grow but avoid over-watering. Let the potting mix dry down

between waterings. Stick your finger in the potting mix up to your knuckle. If it's dry, it's time to water. Water thoroughly, until you see pooling near the container holes. Apply the water to the base of the plant, and try to keep water off the leaves. To keep herbs growing longer, fertilize your herbs every 6-8 weeks.

Maintaining and Enjoying Your Herbs

Frequent, light pruning of your herb plants not only means that you get to enjoy them in your cooking but also helps keep your plants compact and growing new leaves. You won't hurt them. Pruning will prevent your plants from growing too tall, and harvesting often helps extend the growing period of your herbs so you can get the most out of them. Keep an eye out for flowers, and pinch them off just below the bud as soon as you see them appear. Flowers can change the taste of your herbs.

Six Essential Kitchen Herbs

Garlic Chive: A hardy perennial that grows in grass-like clumps, with flat, blue-green blades and clusters of bee-attracting white flowers-all edible. The plant's delicate flavor is ideal for salads and dishes that regular garlic would overwhelm.



ENGLISH THYME: A compact perennial evergreen shrub that produces small, gray-green, leaves for harvesting year-round. A key component of fines herbs in French cuisine, the plant blooms with white to pale purple flowers.

TUSCAN BLUE ROSEMARY: Cooks favor this fast-growing upright form of perennial rosemary over the trailing variety because of its more flavorful needle-like leaves, which cover the plant all year long.



SWEET BASIL: An Italian staple for sauces and the key ingredient of pesto. Very easy to grow, the annual yields a plentiful harvest of extra-large aromatic dark-green leaves.

COMMON SAGE: Evergreen perennial with gray-green leaves that release a unique, intense flavor and aroma



GREEK OREGANO: Offering a more robust scent and flavor than Italian oregano, this bright-green variety is ideal for growing in pots, where it can trail over the edge. Blooms with white flowers in late summer, attracting honeybees. Suitable for container or ground planting. Require full sun.