

# HERBS

Care Sheet · [www.LibertyFamilyFarms.com](http://www.LibertyFamilyFarms.com) · Ludlow, Massachusetts

## Choose Your Herbs



Rosemary spears

### Hardy Varieties

Hardy herbs are also referred to as woody, due to their tough, fibrous stems that are hard to chew. Leaves are picked from the stems and chopped before adding to soups, stews, roasts, vegetables, and sauces. Sometimes whole sprigs are added to the pot or pan and the stems are removed before serving. This is a much easier process when time is of the essence, or if you simply don't like to chop! Some popular hardy varieties in our herb lineup include:

- Oregano
- Rosemary
- Sage
- Sweet Marjoram
- Thyme



## Grow Your Own Herbs

### High-Flavor/Low-Maintenance

If you can find some soil and a sunny spot, you should have no problem growing your own flavorful herbs. A popular location is outside the back door, since it is often near the kitchen or barbecue area. If there's no room for a garden bed, containers work fine outside, too, just be sure they have plenty of drainage. Water regularly as part of your daily routine because herbs can dry out quickly. Try to water gently, so as not to damage any delicate leaves or flowers that you might want to use as a garnish!

### Windowsill Herb Gardens

An obvious choice for a sunny spot is a windowsill, preferably close to the kitchen, since that is where herbs seem to get used the most. Tea cups and mugs make cute flower pots, with some small stones in the bottom for drainage under the potting soil. An indoor herb garden has the advantage of being available all year long, regardless of the weather—just remember to water!



Cilantro in a kitchen box

## Tender Herbs

Tender herbs are usually eaten raw or added at the very end of a cooked dish. As leafy greens they are often tossed in salads or used to balance the heat of a fiery salsa. Bright and aromatic, chopped tender herbs also make a fresh, flavorful topping for rice, pizza, or assorted pasta dishes:

- Basil
- Chamomile
- Cilantro
- Dill
- Garlic Chives
- Parsley

## Spreading Mint

Refreshing Mint is a wonderful herb for making hot or cold tea. It's also great in cocktails, especially as a garnish.

Remember: Mint can be used in savory dishes, too. Add it to rice or couscous for a little extra zip.

Here's a tip: Members of the Mint family spread vigorously, so consider planting Mint in its own separate bed or in containers:

- Catnip
- Chocolate Mint
- Lemon Balm
- Mojito
- Spearmint

# Storing Fresh Herbs

Snip herbs straight out of the garden and use them as needed. Don't be afraid to harvest herbs often, because the more you cut them, the more they grow. If you snip more than you need, you can always store fresh herbs to use later.

## *Arrange Your Herbs in a Vase*

Place clean herbs in a vase or mason jar of water on the kitchen table or counter. They're fragrant, pretty, and practical! Arrange them as you would flowers, with vertical elements like Rosemary surrounded by leafy Parsley and Mint. Add lacy Dill tucked in here and there, as the herbal version of baby's breath.

## *Keep Leftover Herbs in the Fridge*

Wrap clean herbs loosely in a damp paper towel and store in a plastic bag in the produce bin of the fridge. If you like, simply place the mason jar of herbs in the fridge—but be careful not to tip it. Place a piece of rubber shelf liner under the jar, and keep it on the door of the fridge if there's room.

## *Hang Upside Down to Dry*

Use twine or rubber bands to form bunches of clean hardy herbs and hang them upside down in a dark, dry place to dry. This can take seven to ten days, depending on the herb. Once dried, whole or crumpled herbs can be stored in glass jars (label them!) on the spice shelf. Dried Sage can be rubbed through a sieve before storing—this is worth doing simply for the fragrance it emits!

## *Freeze into Individual Cubes*

Place sprigs of tender herbs in an ice cube tray and fill with water; freeze. Herb cubes can be thawed and used as needed, or added to soups and stews while still frozen. Cubes of Mint or Lemon Balm can be used as-is in cocktails, iced tea, or lemonade.

## *Try Making Herb Sea Salt*

Mixing them with salt is another way of prolonging the life of fresh herbs. Simply combine about 1/4 cup herbs with one cup of coarse sea salt and pulse in the food processor or blender. Spread on a sheet pan covered with a dry towel and let dry for about a day, then store in a glass jar for up to six months; the salt acts as a preservative. Use herb sea salt in your favorite recipes or even as a body scrub.