



## Beginner Herbs for Chickens

*By Erin Allen, Licking County Master Gardener Volunteer*

1. Mint – easy to grow. It lowers body temperature when infused in water. Deters Rodents and insects when planted around coop or hung in bunches.
2. Oregano – Antibacterial and antiparasitic properties, vitamins, calcium, and antioxidants. Combats coccidiosis, salmonella, infectious bronchitis, avian flu, blackhead, and e-coli. Mix is feed or hang in bunches for birds to snack on. Add to baby chicks feed to strengthen immune system.
3. Chamomile - kills mites and lice, repels fleas, antiseptic, anti-inflammatory, antibiotic, calming, relaxant, detoxifier. Add to feed or herbal tea.
4. Lavender – Helps repel insects. Calming properties and beneficial to the circulatory system. Use in Nesting boxes, hung in coop to reduce stress or in dust bath.
5. Comfrey – aides in digestion when added to food or placed as a snack. Healing Salve can be made from leaves.
6. Calendula – Repels insects. Flowers are edible and can be added to food to enhance yolk color. Calendula has anti-inflammatory antibacterial and antioxidant properties.
7. Thyme – Repels insects. Lemon Thyme has a stronger sent that may be more effective. Antibiotic properties. Add to food to give a health benefit.
8. Parsley – laying stimulant, aides in blood vessel development, feather growth and eggshell strength. High in Vitamins A, B C Calcium, Iron, and protein.
9. Sage – General health, laying stimulant, antioxidant, antiparasitic
10. Garlic – boosts immune system, increases respiratory health, natural wormer. Reduces the smell of manure if fed regularly. Float in water, crush and offer free choice or add garlic powder to food in a 2% ratio.
11. Wormwood – Helps repel mites. Plant around coop to deter snakes. Tie bouquets of wormwood to the roosts, make sachets for your nesting boxes or hang cuttings in your coop as an ongoing mite repellent.
12. Natural Wormer plants – Dill, carrots, Chicory, Cucumber, Dill, Garlic, Hyssop, Mint, Nasturtium, Plantain, Pumpkin, Squash, Watermelon
13. Cayenne Peppers – increase body temperature. Aids circulation, blood flow and metabolism, appetite stimulant, antiseptic, digestive enhancement, natural wormer, increases egg production. Add to feed or give as free choice
14. Dried Corn – Only give during the colder months as it will raise the chicken’s body temperature during digestion.

## Licking County Master Gardener Volunteers



### Successful Gardening with and for Chickens

Gardening with Chickens can be fun, beneficial, rewarding and sometimes frustrating. If not careful, chickens can destroy a garden quickly. However, if the correct precautions are taken, chickens can be useful tools in your garden. Planting beneficial plants can also assist in the health of our flock, insect and pest control and egg quality.

Chickens are great gardening assistants. Want to put in a new bed or extend your garden but no time to prepare the ground? Chickens are great tillers. Install a temporary fence and let your chickens go to work. There are great inexpensive temporary rope fences such as the one pictured available or it could be a simple chicken wire fence. The top of the fence should not be rigid as a chicken needs to not be able to perch on the fence which will allow them to leave the enclosed area. If you have hawks in the area install deterrents such as pie pans, bird tape or a scarecrow. Then let your chickens go to work! Adding treats or scattering food to the area to encourage the scratching behavior and they will quickly prepare the area for planting. Chickens don't understand there are certain areas that they shouldn't do you the favor of tilling, like your newly planted garden. Protecting areas with fencing or just wrapping your plants in chicken wire (picture at heading) will keep your plants safe until you are ready to harvest for your or to share with your chickens. If you do not protect your plants, chickens won't share and will consume what is available.



Design your garden to grow for your chicken's health. There are so many natural herbs and plants to keep them healthy. Did you know that pumpkin is a natural dewormer and they love them? You can add marigolds around your coop and run to help with insect control. Plus, looking for those super orange yolks? Calendula and Marigolds added to feed can help improve yolk color. Watermelons are a great hydrator during hot weather. Mint is a great example. Growing it around your coop can help prevent will discourage rodents. Adding leaves to your flocks' water will help in cooling their bodies during the summer and it is a great destressor for your flock! Oregano is a great natural antibiotic used not only by backyard keepers, but large producers leverage it to keep their flocks healthy. The list is endless and even what is in the garden just scratches the surface. Check out the plant markers in the garden for the benefits of more herbs and plants.

Gardening with and for chickens, ducks and geese can be rewarding for both you and your flock. I hope this garden gives you some inspiration!

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