



9 herbs to know & grow

Emergence Gardens, South Dartmouth



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Notes





Welcome lover of herbs! I hope you find this booklet helpful no matter where you find yourself on your growing journey.

Why herbs?

There is no real definition for herb. The origins really just mean plant, and in culinary terms it is any plant used in a dish that is not the main ingredient. Botanically, an herb is a seed-producing plant that dies down at the end of a growing season. These days we think of a finite set of plants when we say herb, some culinary, others medicinal but in essence all plants with leafy green matter the experience a winter die back are herbs.

Which herbs?

For this booklet I chose 9 herbs that I either love to cook with, grow or just admire. I use the number 9 a little loosely since for some I group multiple herbs together. There is no particular rhyme or reason to those I've chosen and it is nowhere near a complete list of what you can, should or might want to grow in your window box, backyard garden or homestead plot.

Why 9?

The number nine was one of great significance and sacredness in the traditions of my Northern European ancestors. When working with herbs we are reweaving the tapestry that connects us with our ancient forebears who worked intimately with plants and saw plants as not just something to consume but as beings and friends who they developed relationships with. The number 9 is to honor those ancestors and to help me remember to listen for their small voices when I plant, gather and work with herbs.



THE HERBS

1. Parsley
2. Cilantro (and Coriander)
3. Basil (Italian, Thai and Tulsi)
4. Thyme
5. Sage
6. Oregano (and Marjoram)
7. Rosemary
8. Mint
9. Chamomile





Overview

Most of the herbs in this booklet are perennials, meaning they come back year after year. All can be started from seed in our climate here in zone 7a and it's possible to save seed easily from several of them.

What we commonly call herbs are usually grown from very small seed, meaning that they should also be started in very small containers and gradually potted up into larger containers and/or the ground as the plant grows.

Getting to know the subtle difference between leaf structure can help you identify plants that have self-sown and not weed them out before they grow!

Parsley

Parsley is one of the most underrated and overlooked herbs in my opinion! It's more than that bland garnish, it's packed with vitamin C and when used in fresh salads or on top of eggs it can add both deliciousness and nutrition.

Parsley can be tricky to grow from seed, you want to be sure not to let cells dry out but also not to over dampen the early growth. Parsley is slow to bolt, or go to seed unlike some look-alikes. When planting in early spring, give the plant plenty of room and nutrients and it will continue into the winter months. If protected through the winter the plant will seed in the second season. Collect the seed or allow it to self-sow for continued parsley love.

Spacing 6"-12", can be companion planted. Grows well in full sun but can also grow in areas that do not get all-day sun.



Cilantro and Coriander

Cilantro is one of those herbs that makes things taste so fresh. The seeds produced by cilantro are also the herb coriander, also excellent to add a fresh taste to warm dishes.

Cilantro seeds are bigger than many herb seeds and can be direct seeded with good success. They are quick to germinate and also quick to bolt.

Cilantro does not like it hot and does not like to be crowded. You can continue to harvest cilantro leaves from the outside of the plant being mindful not to cut the growing tip. as long as the leaves remain wide

The flowering heads are great for beneficial insects and pollinators and you can collect seed for use as coriander or for next years plantings, or let the seeds self-sow in your garden.

Spacing 3"-6", can be companion planted. Grows well in full sun, choosing a shady area during the hot season can slow bolting.

Basil

Basil seems by far to be the most popular herb in these parts. Italian, Thai and Tulsi (Sacred or Holy) Basil all have similar growing habits.

Seeds are very small but do surprisingly well when direct seeded in the garden. They can also be started in pots. Basil likes it warm and should only be put outside once all danger of frost has passed.

Picking off the flowering heads can prolong the life of the plant and produce more side shoots. Thai and Tulsi will self-sow in our climate.

Spacing 8"-12", can be companion planted. Grows well in full sun, also benefits from shade in the hot season.





Thyme, Sage, Oregano & Marjoram

These are all easy perennials in our climate. Be sure to give these plants plenty of space and they will return year after year in your garden.

From the second year on it is common for Broadleaf Sage and Thyme to produce flowers, both beautiful and delicious, the flowers are edible!

Slow to grow from seed, should be started in a greenhouse in early spring.

Spacing 24"-36". Full or partial sun can work for these plants.. Well-drained soil is best.

Rosemary

One of the hardest perennials to keep going in our climate, she needs to be protected from the elements in most cases to survive the elements. There are some hardier varieties that have a better chance at withstanding our winters.

Can be grown as an annual. Very slow to start from seed, primed seed is helpful for growing from seed.

Spacing annual 6"-12", perennial 3'-4'. Best in full sun with well-drained soil.



Mint

Mint is one of my favorite herbs to add to dishes for a fresh taste. Ok, you've probably guessed by now I both have no favorites and all the favorites, but really, it's great!

When growing mint: CONTAINER, CONTAINER, CONTAINER. Although some members of the mint family are more aggressive than others they all spread. Make sure to put the mind in an enclosed space, either a pot or a separated bed with deep edging. Mint grows on a rhizome and it will find it's way everywhere if you aren't careful!

Spacing is sort of irrelevant, put it by itself! Shade will slow growth so this is a good one to utilize a shadier space.,.

Chamomile

Yes, like the tea! This herb smells incredible and can be gathered and brewed fresh or dried for curing your winter ails.

Readily self-sows but can be controlled easily by gathering whole plants if desired. Can be direct seeded or started in a greenhouse.

Spacing 4"-8", can be companion planted. Grows best in full sun.





Closing

This booklet just grazes the surface of the wonderful world of growing herbs. Herbs are amazing medicine for the spirit and the body, even without bringing in the benefits of medicinal herbalism.

I hope you've learned something or been entertained by these pages, or both! To connect with me more you can join my Earth Garden Building Community or find me on Instagram @emergencegardens.

<https://emergencegardens.com/earth-garden-community>

