



FACEBOOK LIVE WEBINAR

The Garden Guru's Secrets to Growing Herbs

Herbs are one of the most integral parts of edible gardening and farm-to-table experiences. These edible plants are for everyone, whether you are growing them in your vegetable garden, your apartment patio, or even in your kitchen window. Mike, the Garden Guru is here to tell you everything there is to know about herbs-from their care, to varieties, and more.

TIME TO TASTE YOUR GARDEN

Herbs are such an easy and rewarding group of plants to grow and enjoy in your garden. They are very versatile and can be grown in a variety of containers from garden beds and pots to raised beds and indoor garden, there are endless possibilities with herbs.

HERB CARE

Soil: When planting up herbs, it is important to consider your soil.

In the Ground: When planting anything in the ground, including herbs, you will need to amend your soil. Follow McDonald Garden Center's rule of thumb when it comes to soil mixtures: 1/3 compost, 1/3 perlite, and 1/3 of your own dirt that came from the hole you dug out. This rule applies to direct ground planting as well as raised beds.

In Containers: If you are planting in containers you always want to use a potting soil. Our McDonald Garden Center Natural & Organic Potting Soil is a great choice to start with because it is formulated for Hampton Roads conditions.

Light -

Herbs love as much sun as you can give them. In the gardening world, we refer to this as "full sun" or 6+ hours of direct sunlight daily. If you are growing herbs in containers, you have a little more versatility when it comes to moving your pots around for the best light conditions. If your herbs are not getting enough light, you will find that the stems will start to stretch and you will not get as many tasty leaves as desired. This is an important note if you are interested in growing herbs indoors. The Garden Guru has a webinar all about that [here](#).

Feeding -

Although herbs are a source of food themselves, they need plant food to grow strong and resilient all season long. Here are some of our top recommendations for herb plant foods:

- McDonald Garden Center Greenleaf (both traditional and organic)
- Espoma's Garden Tone and/or Biotone Starter Plus
- Earthworm Castings
- All Purpose Liquid Plant Food from Shultz

Pruning -

All herbs benefit from frequent pruning and will often give you tremendous amounts of new growth when pruned regularly. We all want our plants to grow and be healthy, but remember the purpose of growing herbs is to eat them! So, use them at your leisure.

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Drying -

Herbs are best used fresh, but at the end of the season you can dry your herbs to use in the non-growing season. The best method to drying herbs is to bundle the stems of each kind and hang them to dry. Don't do this in more active part of your home, like your kitchen or living room, as these areas are bound to cause more moisture and disruption as the herbs are drying.

Here is our list of some easy ones to try out first:

- Bay
- Dill
- Marjoram
- Oregano
- Rosemary
- Thyme

PRO -TIP: For more moisture-heavy herbs like basil, chives, and mint, try freezing them for later use instead of drying.

RECOMMENDED HERB LIST & USES:

- **Basil** - Tomato-based dishes, pesto, salads.
- **Bay** - Sauces, soups, stews, marinades.
- **Catnip** - For your furry friends!
- **Chives** - Potato & egg dishes, soups, soft cheeses.
- **Cilantro** - Salsa, spicy dishes.
- **Dill** - Fish, dip, grilled meats, pickling.
- **Fennel** - Fish, soups, teas. A favorite of swallowtail butterflies!
- **Lavender** - Essential oil, jam, ice cream, topping for beverages.
- **Lemon Balm** - Salad, sauces, tea, potpourri
- **Lemon Grass** - Helps keep bugs away, use with ginger for great flavor.
- **Mint** - Use in teas and beverages.
- **Oregano** - Pizza, stews, chili.
- **Parsley** - Poultry, oils & vinegars, dressing.
- **Rosemary** - Poultry, soups, stews, steak.
- **Sage** - Squashes, omelettes, butter, bread, turkey.
- **Stevia** - Sweetener for teas & coffee.
- **Tarragon** - Chicken, fish, vegetables.
- **Thyme** - Meats, vegetables, sauces, dressings.

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