Growing Popular Culinary Herbs IN Northeast Florida

Herbs Have Many Uses
- Culinary
- Nutrition & Health
- Landscaping

Reduce Sodium and Add Nutrients

Use rosemary spears for shish kabob

A collection of herbs in containers in a sunny place near the house provides diversity in the landscape and kitchen

Mary Puckett
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“The Foundation of the Gator Nation”
What to Consider When Picking A Site

- How do you plan to provide water
- Sunny Location
- Air Circulation is important
- Test pH
- Well Drained Soil

“Florida Vegetable Gardening Guide” / “Herbs In The Florida Garden”
“Minigardening (Growing Vegetables in Containers)”
Commercial Ready: Use Soilless Mix or Make Your Own

Always moisten soil uniformly before planting…

When filling container, do not compact!!

“Gardening in Raised Beds” Terry DelValle
“Minigardening (Growing Vegetables in Containers)”

Potting Mixes for Certified Organic Production
Don’t leave your herb in that small pot!!

Moisten soil uniformly

Take plant out of original container & inspect it for circling roots

Add soil w/o compacting

Make a hole large enough to accommodate root ball

Insert the plant into the hole

Firm the soil around the root ball

Fertilize

Water only when needed
Sources of Fertilizer – Follow Label

• **DRY**
  - 6-8-8 6-6-6
  - 8-8-8 10-10-10

• **WATER SOLUBLE**
  - Peters
  - Miracle-Gro

• **Liquid Plant Food**
  - Fish Emulsion
  - Seaweed
  - DYNA-GRO 7-9-5

• **TIME-RELEASE**
  - Osmocote 14-14-14

- First number is the per cent of nitrogen
  - Promotes green growth

- Second number is the per cent of phosphorus
  - Promotes root growth and fruit development

- Third number the per cent of potassium
  - Promotes disease resistance and root development

Granular 3-4-4

Liquid: Fish Emulsion and Seaweed

“Organic Vegetable Gardening”; “Minigardening (Growing Vegetables in Containers)”

“Florida Vegetable Gardening Guide”
Water as needed
Basil
Ocimum basilicum

- Semi-tropical, frost tender
- Pinch often to keep bushy and keep stems tender
- Keep flowers pinched unless growing to attract bees!!!
- Leaves have warm, spicy flavor, best used fresh or made into pesto
- Add at end of cooking for best flavor

Crimson King

Emily / Sweet Basil
- Compact version of the classic Genovese type
- Superior for pot culture
- Shorter stem-length between leaf nodes
- Longer-lasting with regular harvesting
Thai Basil
- Deep green leaves
- Purplish flowers
- Anise/licorice/clove scent

Greek Columnar
*O. Citriodorum “Lesbos”*
- Does not bloom
- Tall narrow plants
- Spread: 9-12”
- Height: 24-36”
- Several stalks, recommend staking
- Propagate by cuttings

Basil comes in various types:
- Genovese is the standard sweet basil
- Cinnamon basil
- Lemon basil
- Purple

African Blue
*O. Kilimandscharicum x basilicum*
- Cage: 3’x3’ or more
- Flower is sterile, propagate via cuttings
- Cross between Dark Opal and Camphor basil
- Spicy fragrance has hints of camphor
- Attracts honeybees and butterflies
- A tasty seasoning

Deep green leaves
Purplish flowers
Anise/licorice/clove scent
Chives
Allium schoenoprasum &
Allium tuberosum

- Easily divided or start from seed
- Easy to grow, low maintenance
- Growth effected by heat
- Snip often to stimulate growth
- When harvesting can cut 1 to 2 inches from soil level
- Has many culinary uses and is best used fresh
- Chop stems and add them to recipe or use stems and flowers in vinegar
- Essential for Fines Herbes
Lemongrass
*Cymbopogon citratus*

- Native to Malaysia
- Usually started from a side shoot with a few roots
- Not frost hardy
- pH 4.3-8.4
- Survives in partial shade but prefers full sun
- Overwatering lowers oil content of leaves
French Tarragon
*Artemisia dracunculus* (L.) var. *sativa*

- Artemisia, 2014 Herb of the Year
- Perennial herb, but treated as an annual in Florida
- Goes dormant in the winter
- A warm season herb
  - Melts in our high humidity
- Buy rooted cuttings or small plants in the spring
- Grow in containers
- Has shallow lateral root system
- Best to water in morning
Mexican Mint Marigold
Tarragon *Tagetes lucida*

- Grows into an attractive mound of dusty green foliage
- Needs dormancy period- our area is perfect
- Divide every 2-3 years
- High shade to full sun
- Needs good air circulation and drainage
- Only way to kill it – too much water!!!!
- Harvest when leaves are plentiful
- Blooms in fall. Cut flowers to encourage foliage and use in vinegar
- Good in sauces, marinades, poultry and fish
Cilantro/Coriander
Coriandrum sativum

- Great backup plant for basil

- Requires cool evenings, does well in the winter
  - Seed in Fall, Winter & Early Spring

- Hot weather causes bolting

- Leaves are known as cilantro

- Seed stage is Coriander

- Consider slow bolt varieties

- Used in Mexican, Chinese, and Mediterranean dishes
Dill
Anethum graveolens

- Cool season annual
- Plant in full sun
- Well drained moist soil
- Can start to harvest when plants are 6” tall
- Snip green leaves, for seeds, collect when light brown, before they scatter (temperatures get to 80°)
- Leaves, flowers and seeds used for pickling and flavoring
- Good flavoring for salads, dip, fish, and vinegars
- When cooking with fresh dill, as with other fresh herbs, add just before serving a hot dish
Mint
*Mentha* spp.

- Many types
- Full sun in winter
- Some shade in summer
- Develops underground runners, therefore keep containerized since it can be aggressive
- Start with a transplant not seeds, use cuttings from the mother plant to get a true mint flavor
- Snip freely to keep stems tender, keep from getting woody
- Garnish, brew leaves into tea, mint jelly and spruces up deserts well

**Peppermint**
*m. peperita*

**Spearmint**
*m. spikata*
Lemon Balm

*Melissa officinalis*

- Perennial lemon-scented herb belonging to the mint family
- Roots easily from cuttings
- Moist well drained soil
- May take up to 2 years before forming a clump
- Use in tea, chopped in salads or in salad dressing
- Any recipe desiring a lemon-minty flavor
Mint

Mints usually go dormant in the heat, but these come back when it warms:

**Egyptian Mint**
*Mentha niliaca*

*Perennial 2 to 3’ tall*
*Robust plant with sturdy upright stems and large velvety gray leaves*

**Ginger Mint**
*Mentha arvensis “Variegata” m.x gentillis*
*Variegated leaves*
Oregano *Origanum*

- Can only be sure of flavor when started from cuttings or division
- Full sun and well-drained soil
- Wonderful in Italian dishes, meats, breads, and shellfish
- Strongest flavor just as flower buds form
- Can start harvesting when 6” tall
- Do not be shy about cutting it back, keep stems tender
- Enjoy all year

**Italian** *Origanum x majoricum*

**Mexican Oregano** *Lippia graveolens*

**Mexican Oregano** *Poliomintha longiflora*
Parsley
*Petroselinum crispum*

- Likes cooler months
- Will survive summer if not in direct sun
- Needs moist but not constantly wet soil
- Flat-leafed and curly
- Great for butterfly garden
- Used in pesto with basil to tone down the basil taste
- Use as a breath freshener, garnish, salads, casseroles and dips.
- When added to soups, add just prior to taking from the heat
- Cut stem down to soil surface or harvest from outer leaves
Rosemary
*Rosmarinus officinalis*

- Small perennial evergreen with very spicy odor
- Likes to be dry, in full sun, therefore good drainage is a must and good air circulation
- Grows as a landscape plant all year
- Best started from cuttings
- Cut no more then 1/3 of foliage at a time
- Use fresh for best flavor
Rosemary

Prostrate (Creepy-Crawly)
Romarinus officinalis prostratus

Upright Romarinus officinalis

Rosmarinus officinalis
“Huntington Carpet”

Rosmarinus officinalis
“Foxtail”
Thyme
*Thymus vulgaris*

- Needs good drainage
- Grows best if kept on dry side
- Can get woody, therefore benefits from frequent cutting
- Many flavors (lemon, lime, caraway, and oregano)
- Rub chopped leaves into beef, lamb, veal, or pork before roasting
- Add to soups, stews, stuffing, and rice
- Brew into tea with a little rosemary and mint
Sage
Salvia officinalis

- Perennial is best started by seed or cuttings
- Needs good air circulation
- Harvest when leaves are plentiful and plant is vigorous
- Trouble making it through our wet, humid season
- Process with an oil base making a paste and freeze
- Good with soup, beef, veal, poultry, pork and dressing for your turkey
Bay, Sweet Laurel, Bay Laurel

*Laurus nobilis*

- Native to southern Mediterranean region
- Grown commercially for its aromatic leaves in:
  - Turkey, Morocco, Portugal, Spain, Italy, France and Mexico
- Full sun to partial shade
- Do fine in summer heat
- Bear temperatures down to 28 degrees
- Protect from cold winter winds
- Excellent shrub for hedges
- Responds well to pruning, a favorite for topiary sculpture
- Slow growing
- The intense flavor of fresh bay leaves mellow when dried for a few days
- Popular seasoning in:
  - French, Italian, Spanish and Creole cooking
  - Always remove the bay leaves before serving
- Pick leaves early in the day
- When drying, dry under weight so they won’t curl
  - Store in an air-tight jar

Commonly grown in containers
Trim to shape in summer
Insect and Disease Control

IPM

What is Integrated Pest Management?
(IPM): is the use of natural and safe methods to control landscape insects and diseases

- Scout
- Handpicking
- Insecticidal soaps and oils labeled for herbs
- Good air circulation
- Well-drained soil
- Proper watering practices
- Know what grows when
- “Good” bug vs “Bad” bug

Lady Beetle: Predaceous on aphids
Propagating

• Annuals –
  – Mostly cultivated by seed
  – Cuttings: seeds are not available & plants are

• Perennials –
  – Non-hybrid types can be sown from seed
  – Hybrids are propagated by cuttings or division
    Not reliable to type: Lavender, Mint, Oregano, Rosemary, Sage and Thyme
  – Sterile (African Blue Basil)
  – Woody and unproductive (Your favorite: lavender or sage)
  – Unusual (Herbs with variegated foliage)
Cuttings

It takes a healthy stem to produce a quality plant.

Medium
- Holds water but drains well
- Support cuttings
- Well aerated – loose
- pH around 6.5
WARM WEATHER

- Basil
- Garlic Chives
- Cuban Oregano
- Lemon Grass
- Lemon Verbena
- Mexican and French Tarragon
- Pineapple sage

Cuban Oregano
Plectranthus amboinicus
IN BETWEEN

• Likes cold but shows damage below 20°F usually re-grows as temperature rises again
  - Parsley
  - Dill
  - Borage
  - German Chamomile
  - Calendula

• Likes cool/cold but not frost
  - Nasturtiums
  - Geraniums, Scented

Nasturtiums *Tropaeolum majus*

Scented Geranium *Pelargonium “Citronella”*
Cold Weather Herbs

- Chervil
- Onion Chives
- Coriander (Cilantro)
- Fennel
- Lavender
- Mint
- Oregano
- Rosemary
- Salad Burnet
- Sage
- Thyme
- Violas
UNFAMILIAR WITH HERB FLAVOR

- Add herb or spice to small amount of butter, margarine, cream cheese or cottage cheese.
- Let mixture stand at least one hour or overnight. Try on plain cracker.
Combining

• Mild
  – Basil
  – Bay
  – Dill
  – Oregano
  – Parsley

• Robust
  – Garlic
  – Rosemary
  – Sage
  – Tarragon
  – Thyme
HERB PREPERATION AND USES

• Gather herbs early in the morning to capture their full oil
• Just as the dew dries
• Can spray off before harvesting and let dry in sun
• If not processing right away place in a vase of water as a flower arrangement
Good Resources:
International Herb Association
http://www.iherb.org/hoy.htm

Herbs In the Florida Garden
http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/VH/VH02000

Minigardening (Growing Vegetables in Containers)
http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/VH032

“Herbs in the Kitchen” by
Carolyn Dillie & Susan Belsinger

HARVESTING, USING, AND STORING HERBS
CUSTOMARY COMPLEMENTS: FAVORITE FOODS AND HERBS
PDF: Available on the Duval IFAS WEB Page

Local Commercial Grower (Consultant)    Linda Cunningham
Compiled by Mary Puckett Duval County Extension    IFAS/Extension
Additional Resources:

Florida Vegetable Guide
http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/vh021

Organic Vegetable Gardening
http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/vh019

Gardening in Raised Beds

Extension Soil Testing Laboratory
http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/SS/SS31200.pdf

University of Florida’s website for all your questions:
http://www.solutionsforyourlife.com

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