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The Lake County Mission Statement

The Mission of the UF/IFAS Mater Gardener Volunteers is to assist extension agents by providing horticultural education programs and current research-based information to the public through plant clinics, community outreach and through Discovery Gardens.

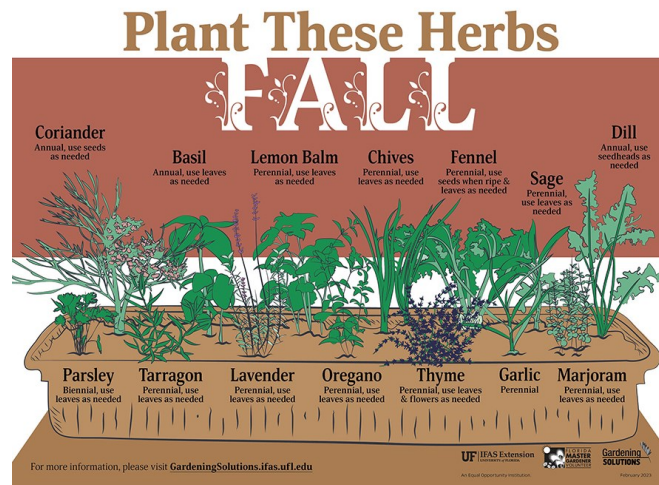
Garden Scoop

Growing Herbs

BY K.S. Kennen, MGV

Herbs have been grown throughout the world and times. The first recorded use of herbs was in the first century BC in Europe. Herbs were very important in the Middle Ages and crucial to survival in a time without prescription drugs. According to *Rplant*, the oldest known herb around the world is parsley which was used by the Greeks and Romans as flavoring and garnish for foods.

In Central Florida, herbs can be planted in the fall, winter, and spring. There are both annuals and perennials that will do well here. Try the perennials rosemary, tarragon, chives, oregano, or thyme. You should be successful growing them in your garden. Rosemary will give you year-round use in your cooking when added to soups, stews, casseroles, and salads. This versatile herb is said to help control dandruff and add shine to your hair when used as a rinse. Mexican tarragon is Florida friendly and with its combined anise, mint, and cinnamon flavor will work well in salads. Luckily this herb tolerates drought, humidity, and heat. Chives can be grown in most soil types and harvested at any time. The tender leaves have a mild onion flavor when added as the last step to soups, dips, potatoes, fish, and eggs. Oregano, known as the pizza herb, is used widely in cooking and medicine. Oregano can be combined with olive oil to create oregano oil, Italian vinaigrette, or a marinade for lamb, chicken, and beef dishes. It, like other herbs, needs from six to eight hours of sun (preferably morning) and a well-drained but enriched soil. Finally, there is thyme. This native Mediterranean herb is drought tolerant and goes well with meat, tomatoes, and beans.



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An Equal Opportunity Institution

Herb Hints

BY K.S. Kennen, MGV



Hint One - Washing herbs is important to remove any dirt or grit before cooking or preserving. No one likes the crunchy sensation of chewing sand. Remove dirt with running water or swishing an herb bundle in a bowl of cool water. Dry herbs using a spinner or pat dry between paper towels.

Hint Two - Freeze fresh herbs to use later by cutting stems diagonally and placing a few springs wrapped in freezer paper into a plastic freezer bag. OR, chop the herb and place into an ice cube tray. Fill the tray with water and freeze. Frozen herbs can be saved up to six months for later use.

Hint Three - Place herb stalks on a baking sheet and place in freezer. When frozen, place in plastic freezer bag. This way, there will be no stalks stuck together.

Hint Four - Dried herbs have a stronger flavor than fresh herbs. If a recipe calls for 1 teaspoon of dried or 1 teaspoon of powdered herbs, add three teaspoons of fresh herbs to the recipe.

Hint Five – If you are being a creative cook and adding an herb to a recipe that does not have it in the recipe, add a 1/4 teaspoon to start with and increase until it tastes right to you.

Hint Six – Thoroughly dried herbs will not spoil and can remain fresh one to three years but the flavor does diminish.

Hint Seven - Be aware of the intensity of the Florida afternoon sun. Herbs need at least six hours of sun and the morning sun is the best.

Hint Eight - Herbs grow well in pots where you can control the soil and location of where they grow.

Hint Nine - Mints are easy to grow, but be careful because of their spreading nature. They can overtake a garden bed. It might be better to grow any mint in a pot.

Hint Ten - Remember some herbs are host plants for butterfly caterpillars. Don't despair if your fennel, dill, or parsley suddenly are eaten down to the stems. It is just a part of the cycle of a butterfly.

Hint Eleven - Following are some resources to read for more information about growing, preserving and using herbs.

Herbs and Spices In Florida—<https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/VH020>

Herbs In the Garden—<https://gardeningolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/plants/edibles/vegetables/herbs.html>

Five Herbs to Plant In December—<https://gardeningolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/plants/edibles/vegetables/five-herbs-for-december.html>

What's Cooking:

If you have a no salt or limited salt diet or just like herbs, try the following blend of herbs as a substitute for salt.



Herb Blend—Makes about 1/3 cup

- 1 tablespoon mustard powder
- 2 teaspoons parsley
- 2 teaspoons onion powder
- 2 teaspoons thyme
- 1 tablespoon garlic powder
- 2 teaspoons dill weed
- 2 teaspoons savory
- 2 teaspoons paprika

Poultry Herb Blend—Makes 1/3 cup

- 2 tablespoons dried tarragon
- 1 tablespoon dried marjoram
- 1 tablespoon dried basil
- 1 tablespoon dried rosemary
- 1 teaspoon paprika

Herbs de Provence (used for marinating and grilling meats) - 2 cups

- 1/2 cup dried rosemary
- 1/2 cup dried thyme
- 1/4 cup dried marjoram
- 1/4 cup dried oregano
- 1/4 cup dried savory

Italian Seasoning—Makes 1 1/2 cups

- 1/2 cup dried oregano
- 1/2 cup dried basil
- 1/4 cup dried parsley
- 1 tablespoon fennel seeds, crushed
- 2 tablespoons dried sage
- 1 tablespoon hot, red pepper flakes

Fish Blend—Makes 1/2 cup

- 3 tablespoons dried dill weed
- 2 tablespoons dried basil
- 1 tablespoon dried tarragon
- 1 tablespoon dried lemon thyme
- 1 tablespoon dried parsley
- 1 tablespoon dried chervil
- 1 tablespoon dried chives



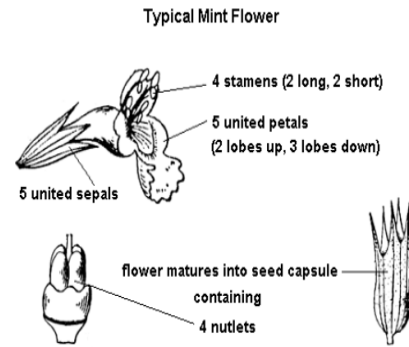
That's a mint?

By– Reggie Doherty, MGV

When I hear the word “mint” I think of herbs peppermint, rosemary, and spearmint. When I looked into the mint family of *Lamiaceae*, I found that the square-stemmed plants I have in my garden are part of that family! So, what are the characteristics of a mint plant?

- Square stems with simple opposing leaves
- Fragrance from volatile oils
- Flowers in clusters with two-lipped, open-mouthed, tubular corollas (united petals)
- Five-lobed, bell - like calyxes (united sepals)
- Dry nutlet for fruit

Many plants in the mint family are grown for their culinary and medicinal properties because of the oils that are produced when the leaves and flowers are crushed or distilled. All of the following plants are in the *Lamiaceae* or mint family. Note that the following herbs have medicinal uses not culinary.



Lion's Ear



Coleus Flower



Salvia



Bee Balm



False Rosemary

Discovery Gardens

Please plan a visit to over twenty different gardens located at 1951 Woodlea Road in Tavares. The hours are Monday through Friday and the third Saturday of the month from 9 am until 4 pm. Just like your yard, Discovery Garden changes with the seasons and will reveal something new with each visit. Come see the changes in the garden.

Tremendous: Spicy Cinnamon Tree

By Jamie Daugherty, RHA

Cinnamon spice comes from the bark of several trees including the Sri Lankan native *Cinnamomun verum*, *Cinnamomum cassia* and the Indonesian native *Cinnamomum burmannii*. Cinnamon has long been used for medicine, food, fuel and more. This medium size tree reaches up to 40 feet in height and does best in zones 10-12. When young, the leaves are bright red, transitioning to green then to white as they age. Flowers are small and inconspicuous in yellow or a greenish white. Fruit is produced but is not edible by humans. While these trees have been cultivated in Florida, proceed with caution. A cousin of this is highly invasive.

This cousin is the invasive camphor tree (*Cinnamomum camphora*). UF does not recommend using this tree for any reason. If you have one in your yard that becomes damaged or diseased, it is recommended to have it removed, rather than trying to save it. This tree is native to China and has been dispersed into our natural areas by birds. This tree was introduced to Florida in 1875 for the ornamental trade and for the production of camphor oil. It is invasive to much of the southeast in zones 8a-11.

If you want to plant something similar, consider the Florida native wild cinnamon tree commonly called Cinnamon bark (*Canella winterana*). This evergreen shrub does best in the southernmost reaches of Florida (zone 10a-11). The purple and white flowers give rise to red berries that attract birds. Wild cinnamon is an endangered tree and difficult to find for cultivation. If you are able to find one, know that you have to protect it from our cooler temperatures in the winter. Anything below 10a temperatures (lowest of 30 degrees) will require covering or moving the plant indoors.



Harvested Bark

Plant Clinic Clatter



DEAR MASTER GARDENER: I would like to plant a camellia, but am unsure when to plant or which varieties to plant. I would like some guidance.

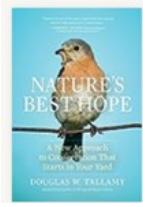
DEAR HOMEOWNER: I am happy to help you with your selection and instructions on camellias. There are two varieties, *Camellia sasanqua* and *Camellia japonica*. Camellias like well-drained, moist soils with an acidic pH 5-6.5 and a lot of organic matter. They do well as container plants and need fertilization two times a year (March and June) with 12-4-12 or 15-5-15 (1 cup around dripline). They can be planted from November to February. If needed, prune them before July 4th.

Here is a comparison of these cultivars:

	<i>Camellia sasanqua</i>	<i>Camellia japonica</i>
Height/Width	Height: 4-15 ft Width: 5-7 ft Small tree, shrub, with compact forms	Height: 6-12 ft. Width: 6-10 ft. Large upright growing shrubs
Lighting	Full sun (early morning best) to partial shade	Partial to Full Shade Full/direct sun will scald leaves/blooms
Growing tips	Mulch 2-4" after planting to help maintain moisture	
Flowers	Small, 1.5-4" diameter Single, semi-double and double petal Fragrant	Med-Large, 3-5" diameter
Bloom Period	Oct-Dec	Late Dec-March, early April
Zone 9 (https://www.gardenia.net/compare-plants/camellias)	'Betty Ridley', 'Bonnie Marie', 'Cinnamon Cindy' 'Fragrant Pink', 'Minato-No-Akebono', 'Pink Icicle', 'Polar Ice', 'Scentuous', 'Snow Flurry', 'Sparkling Burgundy', 'Spring Mist' 'Sweet Emily Kate', 'Winter's Charm', 'Winter's interlude', 'Winter's Rose', 'Winter's Star'	'Alba Plena', 'Annie Wylam', 'Apple Blossom', 'April Blush', 'April Remembered', 'April Rose', 'Australis', 'Carter's Sunburnt', 'Drama Girl'

Resources: EDIS [Camellias, CIR461](#) | [Gardening Solutions](#) | Leu Gardens [Factsheet](#) | [A&M Ext Factsheet](#) | [American Camellia Society](#)





Nature's Best Hope by Doug Tallamy

Book review by Reggie Doherty, MGCV

I read this book as part of a class and found the information from Dr. Doug Tallamy interesting and sensible. The information in this book can help homeowners and municipalities become part of the solution and be *Nature's Best Hope* for redemption. The book begins with the warnings from early wildlife ecologists centuries ago. They warned about the necessity of coexistence with nature through the establishment and conservation of large scale habitats.

His discussion about native plants, nonnative plants, insects, invasives, wasting water with irrigation, and establishing biological corridors for wildlife, reflects much of what is expressed in the nine [FFL Principles](#). He suggests that we need to have a better respect for nature and need to build our own *Homegrown National Parks*, (<https://homegrownnationalpark.org/>), "By restoring the plant and animal communities that belong where you are, you'll develop an intimate connection with each community like that sense of parental responsibility deeply experienced by recent converts....We can never truly own nature, but a sense of ownership creates a strong stewardship ethic, something the land we occupy desperately needs." (Tallamy, pg. 40). He explains that part of the solution and continuation of healing our environment is to establish "Homegrown National Parks". Read this book to learn how to do this. and become a part of the solution.

Mediterranean Garden— Garden of the Month

Congratulations to Fran Morgan, lead master gardener for the Mediterranean Garden. She has maintained this garden with its courtyard look and central fountain. The large planters at either side add to the symmetry that is typical of these type of gardens. The olive trees, which are none, fruit bearing, add contrasting color with their pale, silvery -green leaves. Sit in the garden, listen to the fountain, and enjoy.



Master Gardener Volunteer Plant Clinic

Bring your plant, insect, and soil problems to our Plant Clinic for advise Monday or Wednesday from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. The plant clinic is staffed by volunteers. Please call ahead at 352-343-4101 to be sure that someone is in the clinic to assist you with your questions.

You may also send photos of your local problems to Jamielyn Daugherty at jdaugherty@ufl.edu or to the plant clinic at lakemg@ifas.ufl.edu.

Events

GARDEN TOURS From 1 to 4 pm

Lake Extension Discovery Gardens 1951 Woodlea Rd, Tavares, FL 32778

All tours are either Signage, or Audio. Educational Signage tours are self-paced. Allow 1-2 hours for this tour. Audio tours are self-paced. Allow 1-2 hours for this tour.

Audio Tours—November 6th, 13th, and 27th

Signage Tours—November 6th and 27th

Saturday In the Gardens

November 18, 2023, 10 am to 12:30 pm

Growing and Preserving Herbs Cost \$25

Register on Eventbrite

Join UF/IFAS Extension Agents Lori Johnson and Jamie Daugherty , as they present information about common herbs that grow in Central Florida. Included with the fee, you will plant your own herb seeds, create sample spice and tea blends and handout materials

Library Classes

November 15, 2023, 2 to 3 pm

Palms are Not Trees: why this is important for maintenance

Tavares Library—Free and no registration

Learn all about palm trees and their maintenance.

November 15, 2023, 5 to 6 pm

Holiday Plants—Free and no registration

Leesburg Public Library

Learn about the traditional holiday plants and other colorful options for your holiday season.

November 16, 2023, 2 to 3 pm

Gingers and Bromeliads Free and no registration

Marianne Beck Library -

Gingers and bromeliads are great additions to add a tropical feel to your landscape.

With so many options, your are sure to find one for your landscape.

November 21, 2023, 12 to 1 pm

Tree Pruning For Homeowner Free and no registration

Eustis Library

Trees are the largest plants in any landscape. It is important to learn how to care for them.