

THE HERB COTTAGE

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Guide to Successful Herb Growing in Texas

Herbs are plants that are used as flavoring agents. The common herbs used in cooking are referred to as culinary herbs. Mild or savory herbs impart a delicate flavor to foods while the stronger or pungent herbs add zest to foods. A number of additional herbs are used for medicinal purposes. This publication, however, deals mainly with culinary herbs used in cooking. These herbs are attractive and varied so their ornamental value is also important.

The leaves of most herbs are the part of the plant that is used although the seeds or roots of some herbs can also be used. Herbs are used in small quantities, so usually only a few plants are necessary to provide sufficient fresh and dried herbs for the entire season.

LOCATION

The ornamental value of herbs enables them to be grown in flower beds, in rock gardens as borders or corner plantings, for instance. Many herbs grow very well in pots and containers making them ideal for those without a back or front yard. All that is needed is a small balcony, deck or patio.

Many gardeners establish a small herb garden in the area closest to the kitchen making it easy to pop outdoors and clip the fresh herbs needed for a meal. A small 6- to 10-foot square or rectangular area is sufficient for an outdoor, in-ground herb garden. A circle or free-form design can also be used. Container grown herbs can be placed on steps or porch for easy access.

AS THE GARDEN GROWS

Care for the herb garden is similar to that of a vegetable or flower garden. Select a sunny, well drained location. If you have heavy soil, add organic amendments to make the soil drain better.

Water as necessary during dry periods after plants are established. Generally an inch a week is advisable if no rainfall is present.

If you have very sandy soil, organic amendments will help your soil retain water, yet still drain well. Addition of a balanced organic fertilizer if your soil is very poor may be advisable.

MEDITERRANEAN HERBS

There is a class of herbs, however, that thrives on drier conditions. These are the Mediterranean herbs and are also many of the common culinary varieties. Thyme, rosemary, lavender, oregano and marjoram do well with little water once established. The soil must be extremely well drained especially for lavender and thyme varieties. It is easy to over water this group, so go easy on water and mulch with rocks or gravel to help dry the immediate environment to combat the effects of high humidity.

ESTABLISHING THE HERB GARDEN

Establish annual and biennial herbs, (basil, parsley, cilantro, dill) by planting seeds directly in the garden or starting seeds indoors for later transplanting to the garden.

To save your own seed for planting the next season, harvest the entire seed head after it has dried on the plant. Dill, basil and cilantro are easy varieties to save. Allow the seeds to dry in a protected location that is cool and dry. After the seeds are thoroughly dry, thresh the seed from the heads and discard the trash. Store the seeds in labeled jars or envelopes in a dark, cool, dry location.

Seeds such as dill, caraway, anise or coriander (the seed from the leafy cilantro plant) are also used for flavoring.

Perennial herbs (oregano, rosemary, chives, lavender, thyme...) can be propagated by cuttings or by division. Chive clumps are easily divided. Cuttings of rosemary are easily rooted in a light potting soil in a shady location. Ground layering works quite well on rosemary, oregano, thymes and lavender.

In general, cool season varieties are planted in the fall in most of Texas, and many hardy perennials do best if planted in the fall so

their roots can be established before the stress of summer heat and humidity. Thyme: Thyme is another of the Mediterranean herbs that need excellent drainage and is greatly helped by a rock or gravel mulch much like lavender. There are many varieties of thyme: lemon, French, lime, English, lavender, creeping. The flavors mix well with other herbs and in many types of cuisine. Lemon thyme is very good in tea.

COMMON HERBS FOR TEXAS GARDENS

Aloe Vera, *Aloe vera*: (Perennial) Use the fresh juice for minor burns, insect bites and rashes. It seems that the less care you give this plant, the better it grows. Likes shade. Good potted specimen as it is only winter hardy in the very southern reaches of the state.

Artemisia, *Artemisia spp.*: (Perennial) A group of plants now used mainly for landscaping because of their silvery gray foliage. Includes Wormwood, Southernwood, Silver Queen, Silver King and Dusty Miller. Very tough, insect free plants that should be used more in the landscape.

Basil, *Ocimum basilicum*: (Annual) Every one's favorite summer herb! Many varieties, including Genovese, Spicy Glove, Lemon, Cinnamon, Holy, Licorice, Purple Ruffles, Thai and Sweet. Sweet or Genovese is the tomato herb and a staple in Italian cooking. Freeze the fresh leaves for future use or make a zesty pesto. Nip flower buds to prolong plant life.

Borage, *Borago officinalis*: (Annual) Young leaves taste of cucumber used in salads. Blue star shaped flowers are often candied and used to decorate cakes and pastries. Or freeze flowers in ice cubes for a decorative addition to tea or lemonade. Borage attracts bees to the garden. Start from seed late fall or early spring.

Catnip, *Nepeta cataria*: (Perennial) One of the mints; cats love it so you may have to grow it in hanging baskets to keep them out. Makes a soothing tea for humans. Easy from seed or cuttings.
Marjoram: (Very tender Perennial) Cousin of oregano with a more delicate, sweet flavor. Use in any dish where you want a savory, sweet flavor: tomato dishes, chicken, soups, salad dressings, flavored vinegars. Start from cuttings, seed.

Chamomile, *Matricaria recutita*: (Annual) Feathery, green foliage with small daisy like flowers that are used to brew a sleep inducing tea. Also known as Manzanilla. Likes cool weather. Sow seed fall/winter for early spring blooms. Self sows easily.

Chives, *Allium schoenoprasum*: (Perennial) The smallest member of the onion family. Use leaves to give a mild onion flavor to dishes. Garlic chives are much easier to grow and are used in Asian cooking for their mild garlic flavor. Easy to grow from seed. To harvest chives, clip off the whole leaf and use what you need.

Cilantro (Coriander), *Coriandrum sativum*: Well known in Texas for the use of its leaves in Mexican dishes and salsa. Dried seeds (coriander) have an orangey flavor and are used in pastries, sausage, cooked fruit. Coriander is an important ingredient in pickling spices and curry powder. Likes cooler weather. Plant early in the spring or fall in the southern half of the state. Difficult to grow during summer. Freeze leaves for summer use in salsa and other dishes.

Comfrey, *Symphytum officinale*: (Perennial) Large plant with coarse leaves and white flowers. Very invasive once established, so be careful where you plant it. Used mostly for medicinal properties. Will do wonders when added to a compost pile. Start from division or root sections. Does well in a large container. Not recommended for internal use.

Dill, *Anethum graveolens*: (Annual) One of the easiest herbs to grow from seed. Plant early in the spring or in the fall, it will sprout when it's ready. Used for pickling, with fish, breads and flavored vinegars. Freeze leaves for later use. Large green caterpillars that love to eat dill, parsley and fennel will turn into Swallowtail butterflies, so plant enough for you and them!

Epazote (American Wormseed), *Dysphania ambrosioides*: (Annual/ Tender Perennial) A very weedy herb whose main use is to cook with pinto beans to prevent gas. Use about 5 medium leaves to a pound of beans. Also makes an interesting tea. If you let this plant go to seed you will have it everywhere. Freeze leaves for later use, as it is not winter hardy.

Fennel, *Foeniculum vulgare*: (Annual/ Tender Perennial) Grows like dill with a sweeter, anise flavor. Plant from seed in fall or early spring. Bronze fennel is a very attractive variety that looks pretty in a flower bed. Leafy parts and dried seeds of both the green and bronze are used for flavoring. Finocchio is an Italian variety that grows a large above-ground bulb that is sliced and eaten raw or cooked.

Garlic, *Allium sativum*: Not a true herb, but often included in herb listings. Plant bulbs in fall for a late spring harvest. Whole books have been written on its cultivation and use. Leaves may be used like chives.

Lavender, *Lavendula spp.*: With its gray/green foliage and sweet scented flower stalks, lavender is a must for any herb garden. Can

be tricky to grow in the southern half of the state. Needs excellent drainage, full sun and good air flow around the plant to combat high humidity. A gravel or rock mulch helps keep the surrounding environment dry. Many varieties available.

Lemon Balm, *Melissa officinalis*: Member of the mint family with strong lemon scent and flavor. Easily started from seed, cuttings, division or roots. Spreads rapidly. Likes some afternoon shade. Use leaves for hot or cold tea, fruit cup garnish, or anywhere you want a good lemon flavor. Good bee attractor when in bloom.

Lemon Grass, *Cymbopogon spp.*: Tropical grass prized for its lemon flavored leaves. Use leaves in hot or cold tea, in Asian cuisine, soups, with chicken or fish. Roots are winter hardy in southern half of the state, in the northern regions with a good mulch. Start from division, or seed for a variety known as East Indian Lemon Grass.

Lemon Verbena, *Aloysia citrodora*: A small shrub with very strong lemon scented leaves. Sometimes known as the Queen of Lemon Herbs, it makes a delicious tea. Start from cuttings or transplants. Reliably hardy, highly desirable deciduous shrub.

Mints, *Mentha spp.*: (Perennial) With almost endless varieties, mints are the hardiest and easiest herbs to grow. Very invasive, will soon take over any bed they are planted in, so container growing is a great option. Mints do well in full sun to part shade with average water. Use in hot and cold tea for a refreshing drink. Some mints are seed grown, but many of the flavored ones: orange, grapefruit, apple, chocolate, ginger, variegated pineapple are easily started from cuttings or by digging rooted stems from the garden.

Oregano, *Origanum spp.*: (Perennial) There are over 400 plants that at one time or another have been used as we use oregano. One of the most common and easily available is Greek Oregano, the low, small leaf, spreading variety. A shrubby variety known as Italian is also available. Some Greek varieties have very little flavor, so be sure to taste any herb plant you are planning to purchase. There are several plants known as Mexican Oregano, which are not in the *Origanum* family at all, but have a delicious oregano-like flavor and are popular for Southwest dishes. Oregano likes well drained soil and lots of sun.

Parsley, *Petroselinum spp.*: (Biennial) Another must for the herb garden, parsley also makes an attractive border for a flower or vegetable garden. The two most widely used types are curly and "Italian" or flat-leaf. Many people think the flat-leaf variety has a better flavor, but it does tend to go to seed more quickly. Both are started from seed with patience, in the fall, as they are winter hardy in most of the state. Likes a little shade for summer growing otherwise full sun brings out the flavor best. Very high in Vitamin C, parsley is a good addition to fresh salads.

Rosemary, *Rosmarinus officinalis*: (Perennial) One of the easiest herbs to grow in Texas as it thrives in our hot climate. It is considered very drought tolerant and can be killed by over watering. Rosemary comes in two basic forms: upright and trailing or prostrate. The trailing variety has light blue blooms in spring and throughout the summer. Rosemary is used with pork, chicken and is great on roast potatoes. Rosemary is easily propagated from cuttings or by ground layering.

Rue, *Ruta graveolens*: (Perennial) This herb grows easily from seed or transplants. The yellow blossoms are a great butterfly attractor. In full sun, the leaves and flowers can cause dermatitis in some people, so handle it with care (or gloves..).

Sage, *Salvia officinalis*: (Short-lived Perennial) Here is another plant that doubles as a durable addition to the landscape in Texas if it has good drainage. It is very sensitive to over watering. Best started from cuttings, the common green variety can be grown from seed. Many varieties are available such as golden, tri-color, pineapple, and clary. Sage is a must for poultry stuffing and for use in "breakfast sausage". Leaves can be dried for later use.

Salad Burnet, *Sanguisorba minor*: (Perennial) Use leaves in salads, salad dressings or any dish you wish to have a cucumber flavor without the "burp". Attractive plant to use for borders. Does best in cooler weather.

Sorrel, *Rumex acetosa*: (Perennial) The sharp flavor of the leaves of this plant add an interesting lemony flavor to salads and can be cooked with other greens or made into a soup. Sorrel is easily started from seed in the spring.

Tarragon, *Artemisia dracunculoides*: (Perennial) True French Tarragon is difficult to grow in much of Texas due to our high humidity and summer temperatures. It will grow fairly well in North and West Texas where the humidity is less than in the southern parts of the state. A good substitute for the flavor of French Tarragon in cooking is Mexican Mint Marigold, sometimes known as Texas or Mexican Tarragon. Texas Tarragon is a root hardy perennial with bright yellow flowers in the fall. The leaves can be used fresh or dried in salsa, with chicken, potatoes, eggs or in tea.

Yarrow, *Achillea millefolium*: Once used as a dye for woolens, and as a wound dressing, this is another wonderful plant for Texas landscapes. Its lacy foliage contrasts nicely with the tall, flat flower heads in yellow, dark pink, white or pastels. Starts easily from seed or division.

HERBAL VINEGAR --- SO SIMPLE

What tastes good, has only two calories per tablespoon and is easy to prepare?

Herbal vinegars offer all this and more. They add flavor to salads, marinades, sauces

Start by picking (or buying) your herbs and washing in cool water. Lay them on paper towels and allow to air dry.

The basic recipe calls for 1 cup fresh herbs to 2 cups vinegar. Use either red or white wine, cider or rice vinegar. (You can use white vinegar, but the final product will have a sharper taste.)

Place the dry herbs in a wide-mouth jar, bruise with a spoon and add the vinegar. Cap, shake a little and store in a cool, dark place for 4 to 6 weeks. Check the taste after processing by placing a teaspoon of vinegar on some bread (French is nice). If you like the taste, you are ready to strain the vinegar. If the taste isn't strong enough, let it steep another week or so, and try it again.

To strain the vinegar, use a funnel and coffee filter and pour through until all bits and pieces are strained out. That's it!! Pour into a clean, decorative bottle and add a few sprigs of herbs to decorate and you have just made a real taste treat.

NOTE: Make sure the cap on your bottle is cork or plastic -- not metal. A metal cap will ruin your vinegar. You can put a paper towel or some plastic wrap or wax paper under the cap, if necessary.

Here are some herbal combinations that work well together. By the end of summer, you'll be inventing your own "designer vinegar":

chives, dill, parsley

parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme

basil and thyme

garlic chives, lemon grass

garlic chives, lemon grass, lemon thyme

dill, chives

salad burnet, garlic chives, parsley

PERFECT HERB TEA

Herb teas don't have to be medicinal for you to enjoy them. After a stressful day or for a natural pick-me-up, a cup of herbal tea is soothing and refreshing.

Use approximately 2 teaspoon fresh herbs for each cup (about 6-8 ounces). Pour boiling water over your fresh herbs (you may slightly bruise the leaves to help release their flavors) in a china or glass pot. Metals, including stainless steel, may alter the flavor of the tea. Steep for only 5 to 10 minutes for best flavor. The tea should be lightly colored and mild. Pour and enjoy plain or with a little dollop of honey, a squeeze of lemon or a leaf of stevia. **You may use dried herbs for tea also. Just remember dried herbs have a stronger flavor so only use about 1 teaspoon per cup and proceed as for fresh herbs.**

HERBAL ICED TEA

Prepare tea as for hot herbal tea using either fresh or dried herbs, but more herbs per cup, up to 2 teaspoons fresh, 1 teaspoon dried. Steep no more than 10 minutes to prevent bitterness. Stir in sweetener while tea is hot. Chill and serve, or simply fill a glass with ice and pour hot tea over and enjoy.

For sun tea, fill a jar with cold water, add slightly bruised herbs, stems and all, about 2 teaspoons per cup, set in the sun for up to 3 hours. Stir in sweetener, if desired, while tea is warm, chill and serve, or simply fill a glass with ice and pour tea over and enjoy.

For herb flavored "regular" tea, simply add slightly bruised herbs (mint is great, and/or lemon flavored herbs) while brewing your tea. Remove herbs in times suggested for herbal tea to prevent bitterness. Sweeten, chill, serve and enjoy.

BASIC HERB BUTTER

1/2 pound butter, softened
1 tablespoon fresh chives
1 tablespoon fresh parsley
1 tablespoon other fresh herb, or a combination of 2 or 3 herbs

Chop herbs very fine with scissors or chef's knife, or in a food processor. Work butter with spoon, rubber spatula or fork until smooth. Stir in finely chopped herbs. Taste, and add more herbs if flavors are not strong enough. Keep in mind, that flavors will develop more fully with several hours of storage. Be sure to remove any large stems. Refrigerate or freeze until ready to use.

Note: herb butters may be melted for use, but take care when heating, especially when broiling, as fresh herbs burn easily. Experiment with other additions such as:

lemon juice	finely chopped bay leaf
Dijon mustard	1-2 cloves crushed garlic
dry mustard	paprika

Use your own judgment to determine amounts. Start small, you can always add more. Taste often.

BASIC HERB SALAD DRESSING

- 1/4 c. wine vinegar
- 1 to 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1/2 teaspoon sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon mustard (Dijon-style or prepared)
- 2 to 3 tablespoons freshly chopped herbs*
- 1/2 c. good olive oil
- 1 garlic clove

Blend all ingredients, except the garlic, thoroughly with a whisk or fork. Let the flavors blend at room temperature. Rub the salad bowl with the freshly cut halves of the garlic clove. Add washed and dried assorted crispy greens.

Pour the whisked-up dressing over the greens and serve promptly.

*Try equal parts basil, parsley, thyme and oregano

OR equal parts basil, savory, thyme

OR thyme, chives, basil

OR try your own combinations.

BUTTERMINT COOKIES

Serves: 48 cookies Preparation Time: 1 hour

These are minty, buttery cookies with a bit of a crunch. They are great for tea time, that grand British tradition.

These cookies should be stored in an airtight container. Buttermint cookies can also be frozen to serve later to unexpected company... or yourself!

- 3/4 cup unsalted butter, softened
- 2/3 cup sugar
- 1 large egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon peppermint extract
- 2 cups unbleached flour
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh peppermint or orange mint leaves (if using dried mint leaves, use only 1 Tablespoon)
- pinch of salt

Cream the butter and sugar. Beat in the egg and the extracts. Gradually mix in the flour, then stir in the minced fresh peppermint and salt. The dough will be soft.

Divide the dough into three parts. Using waxed paper or plastic wrap, shape each portion into a cylinder about 1 inches (3 cm) in diameter. Chill the rolled dough for at least an hour. If you are in a hurry you may place it in the freezer for twenty minutes instead.

Preheat the oven to 350° F (175° C). Remove the cylinders one-at-a-time from the refrigerator or freezer for processing, keeping the others cool. Take off the waxed paper or plastic wrap and slice the dough into 1/2" inch (1 cm) rounds.

Place the cookies on ungreased baking sheets. Bake for about ten minutes, until the cookies are a light brown. Avoid over baking.

Immediately removes the cookies from the sheets and cool on a wire rack.

Note: If you don't want little pieces of mint in your cookies, place the mint (fresh or dried) with the sugar in a closed container for a few days. Discard the mint, use the flavored sugar.

SHORTBREAD COOKIES WITH THYME

This recipe calls for fresh herbs. If you use dried herbs, use half as much as listed.

- 1/2 cup plus 1 tablespoon butter
- 1/4 cup confectioners' sugar
- 1 1/2 cups flour
- 1 teaspoon lemon zest
- 2 teaspoons minced fresh rosemary
- 2 teaspoons minced fresh thyme

Extra confectioners' sugar

Cream the butter and sugar together by hand or in a food processor.

Add the flour, lemon zest, rosemary, and thyme. Knead gently to make a soft dough and chill for an hour.

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Roll the dough on a pastry cloth or lightly floured surface about 3/8-inch thick, and cut into

diamonds, circles, or free forms. Pinching the edges, pie fashion, will create an attractive crinkle.

Place the cookies on a greased cookie sheet. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes or until the cookies are lightly golden. It is important not to over bake.

Sprinkle lightly with the extra confectioners' sugar while the cookies are hot. Cool on a rack.
Yields 2--3 dozen cookies, depending on the cuts

~~From Herbal Sweets: A Fresh from the Garden Cookbook by Ruth Bass (©1996
by Storey Communications, Inc.; published by Storey Publishing).

LEMON BALM QUICK BREAD

1 cup sugar
8 tablespoons butter
1/4 cup lemon balm leaves, finely chopped
2 large eggs
1 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/8 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup milk
grated rind of one lemon

Grate the lemon peel and remove the juice from the lemon. Reserve the juice for the glaze.

Cream butter, sugar, and finely chopped leaves. Add eggs and beat well to get a smooth consistency. Add remaining ingredients (flour through lemon rind). Pour into one large or four miniature greased loaf pans. Bake at 350 degrees for 40-45 minutes if using a large pan or 25-30 minutes if using miniature pans.

Before removing from the pans, use a toothpick to prick holes in the crust. Pour Lemon Balm Glaze over the top while the loaves are still warm.

Allow to cool completely before removing from the pan. Loaves can be frozen for later use.

Lemon Balm Glaze

1/2 cup sugar
2 tablespoons finely chopped lemon balm leaves
juice from one fresh lemon (about 4 tablespoons)

*TIP:

To avoid having bits of chopped herbs in the bread, steep the chopped leaves in the liquid for a half an hour or so. If you heat the liquid first, then add the herbs, the flavor develops more fully. This liquid can then be stored in the refrigerator for later use, or used right away in the recipe.

HERB INFUSED SUGAR

Make this flavored sugar with your favorite herb and use in cookies, cakes and teas. Try mint, lemon flavored herbs, rosemary, thyme or lavender.

Put about 2 tablespoons of herbs or 12 or so lavender buds in a jar of fine sugar.

Leave

it for a couple of weeks and you will have delicately scented sugar that can be used in cakes, fruit salad, tea, lemonade and more.

NOTE: When using leaves, you can wrap the fresh leaves in cheesecloth so it is easier to remove them after the sugar is flavored.

SIMPLE SYRUP

An easy way to use flavorful herbs is to make a simple syrup

- 1 C. sugar
- 1 C. water
- generous handful of fresh herbs. (try mint, lavender, lemon balm pr lemon verbena)

Bring sugar and water to a boil in a small saucepan until sugar is completely dissolved. Add herbs, remove from heat, cover and let steep for about 30 min.

Strain herbs from syrup. Store in jar in the refrigerator for up to 3 months.

Drizzle syrup over a platter of fresh seasonal fruits such as melon, pineapple, peaches, red and green grapes, plums and blueberries. Garnish with fresh lavender, as desired.

REFRESHING HERB SODA

- 2 T. Herb Syrup
- 1 T. Lemon juice
- Sparkling water or club soda

Fill glass with ice, add herb syrup, lemon juice and water or soda. Stir well and enjoy!!

Garnish with fresh herb leaves and slice of fruit.

EASY PESTO

- 2 cups clean basil leaves (you can use all one variety or mixed varieties, according to your taste)
- 1/4 - 1/2 cup nuts. Pine nuts are traditional, but you can use pecans, walnuts or cashews for a different flavor.
- 1/2 cup grated hard cheese such as Parmesan or Romano, or a blend.
- 5-8 cloves of garlic, according to your taste
- Approximately 1/2 cup olive or other vegetable oil.

The amount of oil can vary depending on how much cheese and nuts you put in.

Food Processor:

Add all ingredients and process until you have a smooth, well-mixed pesto. The consistency should be similar to that of mayonnaise.

Blender:

This is a little more work than using a food processor, but makes an equally delicious pesto.

Place about a quarter of the basil leaves in the blender jar adding 1/2 cup oil, the nuts and cheese. Blend (I use the puree setting or high setting.) You'll need a wooden spoon or rubber spatula to push the mixture down onto the blades fairly often. **--Don't do what I did one time.... and stick a wooden spoon in the jar before the blades stopped turning. The spoon was jerked from my hand, bounced out of the jar, sprayed oil and basil everywhere and broke the spoon inside the jar. I threw the whole mess away and had to start over so I didn't have splinters in the pesto. In other words.... wait until the blades have stopped turning before sticking the spoon in!!!**

After you have that first mix pretty well blended and the nuts are well ground, just keep adding the basil leaves about a handful at a time until all the leaves are used up. If the mix is too thick, add a little oil to thin it down. It doesn't have to be perfectly smooth. In fact, I like the pesto a little coarse so I can see the leaves, but the nuts should be well ground.

To preserve the pesto, I fill ice cube trays with the mixture and freeze it over night. The next day I remove the pesto cubes and store them in a plastic bag or tub in the freezer. One cube is one serving.

PRESERVING THE HARVEST

Once you've dried herbs from your garden:

- Store herb leaves whole. Crushed or ground leaves lose flavor faster than whole leaves.
- Widemouthed glass jars are best for storage. I save pasta sauce jars although old canning jars are good too.
- Take a piece of note paper and write the name of the herb and the month and year it was harvested. As you're filling the jar, put this paper inside the glass jar with the writing facing outward.
- Store the closed jar in a cool, dry place away from direct sunlight. Moisture, light, and heat are the enemies of anything organic.
- Do NOT put dried herbs in the fridge, the freezer, or next to the stove. All three of these locations are sources of humidity.

Some Common Herbs that dry well:	Some common Herbs that do NOT dry well
Oregano- all types	Basil
Rosemary	Cilantro
Parsley	Chives- FREEZE DRY
Thyme	Garlic Chives- FREEZE DRY
Tarragon	
Sage	
Dill, also FREEZE DRY	
Stevia	

Basil, Cilantro and both chive varieties are very nicely frozen for later use. Basil can be chopped up and placed in an ice cube tray. Carefully pour nearly boiling water over the tray to blanch the herbs, then place the ice cube tray in the freezer. You can then store the basil cubes in freezer baggies for later use in cooked dishes.

Alternately, chop your basil or cilantro and put it in a freezer-safe container. Pour Olive Oil over it and freeze. Since the Olive Oil does not freeze solid, you can use a spoon to remove a tablespoon or so of the herb and use it in stir fry dishes, sauces, marinades and salad dressings.

Your imagination is the limit to the uses of dried, frozen and otherwise preserved herbs!!

RESOURCES

When looking for growing and gardening information on herbs, try and find books and articles written specifically for the southern United States. Many resources are perfectly good for the midwest, California and the west coast or the east coast, but do not address the unique growing conditions we have here in Texas.

BOOKS, SOUTH/TEXAS

- What Can I Do With My Herbs? By Judy Barrett
 - This book can be purchased on Judy's Web Site: homegrowntexas.com/
- Southern Herb Growing by Madalene Hill & Gwen Barclay
- Herbs for Texas by Howard Garrett

BOOKS, GENERAL

- The Big Book of Herbs by Arthur O. Tucker, Thomas DeBaggio
- The Herb Society of America Encyclopedia of Herbs & Their Uses by Deni Bown
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WEB SITES, GROWING IN TEXAS

- The Herb Cottage, <http://theherbcottage.com/>
- Aggie Horticulture, <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/>
- Texas Gardener Magazine, <http://texasgardener.com/>
- Go Texan Program, <http://www.gotexan.org> - click on Publications and E-Zines
- Fall Gardening, <http://plantanswers.tamu.edu/fallgarden/fallindex.html>
- American Botanical Council, <http://www.herbalgram.org/>

WEB SITES, USES OF HERBS

There are so many, but here are a few to get you started

- Susan Weed, <http://www.susunweed.com>
- Susan Weed, http://www.susunweed.com/An_Article_Weed_Self-help1.htm
- Michael Moore, <http://www.swsbm.com/homepage/>
- An interactive, electronic herbal database, <http://www.herbmed.org/>

WEB SITES, ORGANIZATIONS

- Herb Society of America, <http://www.herbsociety.org/>
- International Herb Association, <http://www.iherb.org/>
- Herb Growers and Marketers Network, <http://www.herbworld.com/>

*Good luck and Great Gardening to you
from The Herb Cottage*

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