

A photograph of a garden filled with chamomile flowers. The flowers have bright yellow centers and white petals. They are growing in a dense patch. In the background, a wooden fence is visible. The text 'Tips for Planning a Herb Garden' is overlaid on the image in a green font.

Tips for Planning a Herb Garden

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Before you start

What should I plant? How much should I plant? And where should I plant it? If you're new to herb gardening — and even if you're not — starting your garden can, at times, feel overwhelming. The good news? You don't have to be a master gardener to create a herb garden plan that yields a useful harvest. Here are a few tips to help you kick-start your home herb garden.

Give It Some Thought

As it does with most endeavors, it pays to think through your garden project before you order your seeds or transplants. Which herbs really pique your interest? How much space can you commit to a garden? How much time do you have to devote to weeding, mulching, watering, and other garden maintenance? Answering these questions will help you develop a garden plan that suits your land and lifestyle.

Choose a Good Location

Most herbs grow best when they get at four to six hours of sun a day. Here in Texas, afternoon shade is always a plus. Even a spot in dappled light, such as under an open canopy tree will work. If that spot is close to a convenient water source for irrigation, that's even better. Sowing your seeds or planting your transplants near a water source will make it easier to keep your soil at the optimal moisture level..

Start Small

Bigger doesn't always mean better when it comes to basic garden planning. If you're new to gardening, or if you have limited time to devote to your garden, commit to a plot size that won't overwhelm you and concentrate on a selection of herbs you like and think you'll use. In Texas, rosemary, oregano, parsley are easy to grow year round. Some annuals that work well are dill and cilantro in the cool season and basil in the summer.

Pay Attention to Your Soil

There's no way to overemphasize the importance of good soil: your garden will grow best in nutrient-rich, well-drained, weeded, and loosened (non-compacted) soil. Before you plant, take the time to enrich your soil with quality compost or other organic matter if you want to boost your soil's fertility and your garden's production. Mulch (like leaves, straw, and hay) also adds valuable nutrients to the soil and will cut down significantly on your need to weed. Be careful not to use hay with weed seeds.

Grow What You Love

What's the point of growing herbs you're not going to use? Let your palate or other use dictate your choices when choosing your crops. Try new varieties as your taste for herbs matures or you want to experiment with other uses for herbs such as making salves or other products. A herb garden should be a source of inspiration and relaxation.