

Growing Herbs in Small Places



Cindy Meredith

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Effective herb growing for those with tiny gardens (or no gardens at all)

Herbs are among the most versatile plants that can be grown of any currently in existence, therefore if something of a green-fingered itch has come about for any reason, why not consider beginning a herb garden to satisfy it in style? The very best thing about herbs is that they can be grown by anyone no matter where they live and despite the size of the garden. Furthermore, once the indoor or outdoor garden has blossomed to its full glory, maintenance and upkeep really could not be easier, making the herb garden the ideal project for the amateur with all the wondrous benefits that would be expected from the professional.

Getting started, the first and foremost consideration is where exactly to locate the mini-herb garden. In short, the patch chosen or container to be used should ideally be sited in an area that receives morning sun and afternoon shade if you're growing in Central or South Texas. If looking to plant the garden outdoors, naturally or artificially sheltered areas are also a good idea so as to prevent potential damage from excessive harsh weather conditions. The location can essentially be optimal by thinking of the conditions many of the herbs would endure in their native Mediterranean climate and attempting to replicate them as much as possible.

One important note that is often overlooked – always ensure that the herb garden is situated in the most convenient possible location as it is likely that access to these plants in particular will be required more often for harvest than any other. Situating a herb garden out of reach can be rather disastrous to say the least!

If the soil which is to be used to grow the herb in appears rather solid and lumpy, break it up to a modest extent before planting begins. Such will improve the drainage and distribution of water enormously and help the roots to grow strong and stable.

Before actually going about the planting outdoors it is essential to have decided in advance exactly which herbs are to be grown for two very important reasons – firstly there is the fact that most herbs require very different amounts of space in which to grow and the second is that there is little point in planting herbs that nobody in the family likes! In the case of the former of the two, seed packets and general information in the garden centre will always clearly communicate exactly how large a plant will grow.

If space is really at a premium or the herbs are to be grown indoors or perhaps on a patio, herb gardens are known to simply flourish in containers and pots. What is important is to ensure that the containers chosen have good drainage.

Containers of all kinds are known to dry out much more quickly than outdoor soil, therefore keeping an eye on watering is essential.

The Herb Cottage

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One pot of a decent size can be enough to support a whole range of herbs, such as parsley, sages, chives, thyme, basil, cilantro and lavender – all of which will live and thrive quite happily together under identical conditions. Combining multiple herbs into a single pot rather than planting them separately not only looks great, but cuts down on the required amount of overall upkeep quite considerably.

Mint, on the other hand, is something of an insatiable though delicious example and should always be given a pot of its own to prevent it from simply taking over the space of the others.

Regardless of how much space is available or entirely to the contrary, there is quite literally always room for a herb garden – be it a single pot or a veritable Eden for the enjoyment of the whole family.



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