

# Herb Garden

Being able to cook with fresh herbs from your own garden is as simple as having sunlight, water, and room in your kitchen.

## The Vessel

Herbs can grow in nearly any pot as long as there is drainage. Be sure to select a pot with holes in the bottom (or make small holes in the bottom) and use a saucer to catch excess water. Remove any water collected in the saucer after watering.

Tip: A terra-cotta pot is perfect for growing herbs.

## The Soil

For optimal growth, use soil that is well-draining. Soils labeled for succulents and cacti work well.

## Temp & Light

Herb seedlings thrive at room temperature, ideally between 65°F to 75°F. Placing plants in a south or southwest facing window ensures seedlings receive plenty of sunlight.

## Watering

Check moisture by inserting the tip of your finger into the soil. If the soil is dry up to your first knuckle, add water. If the soil feels moist, check again in a day or two.

## Harvesting

Mature herb plants can be harvested again and again. A good indicator that an herb plant has reached maturity is that it is beginning to set flowers. To promote plant growth, pinch off the flowers on the plant before they bloom. Be selective when harvesting leaves and aim to harvest 50% or fewer leaves on the plant to allow the herb plants to continue growing. Be sure to give the plant several days to bounce back before the next harvest.

**Leafy herbs**, like basil, have leaves that branch off the main stem of the plant, much like leaves on a tree. Harvest these leaves by using your fingers to pinch the leaf off where it meets the stem.

**Grassy herbs**, like chives, have long, thin leaves that originate at the base of the plant. Use kitchen shears to cut the leaves at the base where they emerge from the soil.

**Herbs** like dill can be harvested in two states: while the stems are still green, for pickling, or once the seeds have dried, for spices. At both points use shears to cut near the bottom of the plant, taking the whole stem.



# How to Dry & Store Herbs

Drying herbs in a food dehydrator is the easiest method, however herbs can also be dried in an oven using the following steps:

## STEP 1:

Gently wash the harvested herbs and pat dry with a paper towel.

*Note: Dry only one herb at a time. Drying multiple types at once can ruin the flavor of the herb.*

## STEP 2:

Line a cookie sheet with parchment paper and lay the herbs flat, being sure not to overlap. The parchment paper will help absorb moisture.

## STEP 3:

Place the cookie sheet in an oven set to the lowest possible temperature (180°F or lower). Promote air circulation by cracking the oven door open.

## STEP 4:

After 30 minutes of drying, flip over all the herbs to ensure even drying. Return to oven.

## STEP 5:

After another 30 minutes, check the herbs. If the herbs are crispy and crumble easily between your fingers, they are dry. If not, continue to bake the herbs for 10-minute increments until dry.

## STEP 6:

Once dry, remove from oven and allow herbs to cool completely. Crumble the herbs until they are finely ground using your hands or a mortar and pestle and store in an airtight container until ready to use. Dried herbs can be stored for up to 2 years.

