

HERBS GROWING GUIDE



Herbs are of great value to the kitchen gardener, because in addition to attractive greenery and flowers, they add scents and tastes that boost our moods and improve just about every type of meal. How ironic, then, that they're among the easiest of plants to grow! All they need is sunlight, soil, and a modicum of water to produce lush, useful foliage and flowers.

HERB	WHEN TO SOW	SUN / PART SHADE	SEED SPACING	ROW SPACING	PLANTING DEPTH	SPACING AFTER THINNING	DAYS TO GERMINATE	DAYS TO MATURITY
Basil	When soil workable	Sun/Part Shade	¼ inch	30 inches	½ inch	12 inches	7-10	78
Borage	When soil workable	Sun/Part Shade	12 inch	24 inches	⅛ – ¼ inch	10-12 inches	7-14	50-60
Bread Poppy	When soil workable	Sun	1 inch	24 inches	⅛ inch	6-8 inches	7-10	85-120
Calendula	After last frost	Sun	½ inch	24-36 inches	¼ inch	10-15 inches	10-14	65-80
Catnip	When soil workable	Sun/Part Shade	1 inch	18 inches	¼ inch	18 inches	7-21	85
Chives	When soil workable	Sun/Part Shade	1 inch	12 inches	¼ inch	4 inches	10-15	80
Cilantro	After last frost	Sun	1 inch	15 inches	½ inch	8 inches	15-20	60
Dill	After last frost	Sun	1 inch	2 inches	¼ inch	8 inch	10-15	40
Fennel	When soil workable	Sun	1 inch	2 inches	¼ inch	10 inches	12-18	80
Marjoram	After last frost	Sun	1 inch	18 inches	¼ inch	12 inches	10-15	70
Oregano	After last frost	Sun	1 inch	2 inches	1/16 inch	18 inches	10-20	90
Parsley	When soil workable	Sun	1 inch	15 inches	¼ inch	3-6 inches	20-30	60
Peppermint	When soil workable	Sun/Part Shade	1 inch	18 inches	⅛ inch	8 inches	10-12	85
Sage	After last frost	Sun	1 inch	18 inches	¼ inch	15 inches	10-20	90
Thyme	After last frost	Sun	1 inch	18 inches	¼ inch	8-12 inches	14-28	50
Valerian	After last frost	Sun/Part Shade	12-18 inches	18-36 inches	⅛ inch	18-36 inches	7-14	2 years

Soil and Fertilizing

To find your frost date to determine whether the soil is ready, [click here](#). Most of the herbs listed above do best in well-drained but moist soil, enriched with a vegetable fertilizer. Some even prefer average to poor soils.

Thinning

Thin plants to suggested spacing (see chart) when they reach around 2 inches high.

Watering

Be careful not to overwater. Normal rain and an occasional watering should be enough to keep your herbs growing. In fact, most of these herbs do well with very little water. The exceptions are listed in the Special Notes Section below.

Harvesting

Most of the herbs listed here can be harvested as needed. Use a pruner to remove sprigs or individual leaves, and never harvest more than a third of a plant all at once. If you wish to dry your herbs for later use, do so in a cool, dry, dark place.

Special Notes

Basil: Pinch back or prune the tips to maximize the plant's bushiness.

Bread Poppy: Mix seeds with a cup of sand or other inert material and broadcast over planting area.

Calendula: For earlier blooms, start indoors 6-8 weeks before last frost.

Catnip: Needs a moderate amount of water.

Dill: May require staking. Tastes best when harvested in mid-summer.

Marjoram: Pick the leaves after the flowers bud, but before they open.

Parsley: Soak seeds for 24 hours, then plant as soon as soil can be worked.

Sage: For earlier harvest, start seeds indoors in March.

Thyme: Don't water at all. Pinch back or prune the tips to maximize the plant's bushiness.

Valerian: May need staking. Harvest valerian root for tea when the plant is over 700 days (nearly two years) old.