

HERBS AND HERBALISM
Growing Herbs in Pots
by Dan Salzler

Most people do not think of starting a garden at this time of year. Fall is usually thought of as a time of harvest, but it is also a time of planting. Now is the time for the serious cook to think about the winter herb garden. The garden is quite simple and easy to care for. All you need is seed or well-established plants, a soil medium, a window sill or window area, a flower pot, and water. All herbs need sunlight but not all need a lot of heat. In fact, most herbs grow best in temperatures of between 50 - 60 degrees Fahrenheit.

Seeds and plants can be easily obtained from an herb nursery or seed catalog. A wide selection of herbs from around the world are available to you for your enjoyment. Grow a few favorites, but try something new and different. You might like it!

Soil is an important consideration. Most all herbs prefer a well-drained soil that will allow excess water to pass through but will retain enough capillary water for maximum root development. Potting soil purchased from commercial sources may be used but perhaps a soil additive should be included to improve drainage. Soil additives include sand, vermiculite or perlite.

Light may be the most important consideration for you to deal with but is also one of the easiest to control. Herbs placed in a south or west window will do well, but don't hesitate try a north- or east-facing window if the others are not available. Your plants should receive approximately fifteen to seventeen hours of light per day, though it is not mandatory. The use of Grow-Lights may be used to extend the length of day. If you do not have a Grow-Light on hand, a fluorescent light accompanied by an incandescent bulb will work just as well. Remember that, in general terms, fluorescent lights will produce a plant that is shorter than normal and it will have with short, broad leaves. An incandescent light bulb will produce a plant that is taller than normal with long, narrow leaves. In combination, a well-proportioned, healthy plant will prevail. Remember not to discount your overhead lamps.

Any container will suffice as long as it holds all of the plants you want

to grow. Water your herbs weekly.

Now you have what it takes to start an indoor herb garden and to begin to enjoy the rewards of minimal effort - fresh herbs. Use your herbs in soups and stews, bread, and old favorites, and enjoy a great taste sensation.

Herbal Tomato Juice

2 cups tomato juice - 8 to 10 leaves fresh basil - garlic, to taste - dash of cayenne. Place ingredients in a blender for one minute. Pour over ice and sip through lovage stem "straws."

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