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Learn About Herb Gardening – Get The Natural Facts!

By Robert Mosse

One of the most appealing things anyone will learn about herb gardening is how relaxing and simple growing herbs can be. Discovering all the wonderful, various herbs and what they do is a captivating pastime, and can be quite beneficial. You can use herbs for cooking, as medicinal aids such as topical dressings or healthy teas, or simply for decorative plants in the garden.

There are so many herb plants to choose from, it can be a bit daunting to the beginning herb gardener. A good source of information that you probably have is your cookbook, which often devotes a chapter or two to the uses of different herbs as flavorings and accents.

Planting a Basic Herb Garden

Get acquainted with herb gardening by growing herbs you think you'll use, plus throw in one or two that sound interesting to you. Herb gardens can range in size from small containers to vast outdoor gardens.

To best learn herb gardening, start simple with a small, sunny plot, or use a clay pot filled with potting soil.

The Two Big Needs that herbs have are:

- lots of sun, and
- well-drained soil.

Most herbs have a preference of full or partial sun, and the seed package or nursery will have this information clearly stated. Most herbs will not do well in very wet soil, and watering about every 2–3 days is usually sufficient. Raised garden beds are a good fit for herb gardens. They have excellent drainage and can be easily arranged for proper sunlight.

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When planting herb seeds, cover them lightly with soil, and don't plant the seeds too deep. A good rule of thumb with herb gardening is "the smaller the seed, the shallower you sow." If you are using young herb plants already started in growing trays, simply transplant them into your pots or garden bed. Sometimes the plants in the trays are dry; if so, water them first before planting them.

Finally, remember that annual herbs (herb plants which only grow for one season and then die) and perennial herbs (herb plants which will return the following year) do best when planted separately. This avoids disrupting the perennial plants' roots when it is time to dig out the dead annuals. It also prevents leaving dead root pieces behind which can contribute to fungus growth.

Grow Fresh Herbs for Cooking

Cooking with fresh herbs from your garden is a wonderful experience. To get started, here are gardening tips for two well-known herbs that are great for beginning herb gardeners.

Sweet Basil — Sweet basil leaves are good in salads, and are a main flavoring ingredient in tomato dishes such as spaghetti and marinara sauce. In the northern climates, basil is usually grown as an annual plant. In milder climates, sweet basil will return each year on its own, and therefore is considered a perennial plant.

The sweet basil herb is a pleasure to grow because it thrives in average soil, and likes sun or partial shade. Sow the seeds after danger of frost is over, or start them indoors about eight weeks before growing season and then transplant them outside. You can also purchase ready-to-grow starter plants from nurseries and through catalogs.

It's easy to promote the bushiness of the basil plant leaves by pinching and clipping the herb throughout the summer. Use the leaves fresh during the summer growth months, and in the fall, dry the leaves and store them for use during the winter.

Garlic — Garlic is full of minerals and nutrients, and is known to have great medicinal properties. It is a staple in every chef's kitchen for cooking dishes from chicken and pasta to seafood and vegetables. We've all seen garlic bulbs at the grocery store... but did you know that one simple garlic bulb has enough cloves to begin a garden full of garlic plants? Here's what you do:

When spring arrives and the weather has begun to turn warm, prepare a small garden bed in a sunny spot. Take the cloves and place them, pointy side up, in the soil. Plant them in clusters, or rows, and put a light layer of topsoil over them with some compost mixed in. When fall arrives, lift the garlic bulbs out of their bed.

Dry the garlic by slicing the bulbs into thin slices and placing them on a rack at room temperature. You can also store the bulbs by braiding the stalks and hanging the garlic in a dark, cool space. You may also freeze the entire garlic bulb!

Learn about herb gardening with these herbs, and then begin to branch out with more. In the meantime, you'll add wonderful flavors to your recipes, and mouthwatering aromas in the kitchen!

Robert Mosse is a garden and lawn care specialist and author of the "Easy" Lawn and Gardening Book Series. Find out more about herb gardening

<http://www.lawn-and-gardening-tips.com/herb-garden.html>

– and get Robert's free Guide for 101 Gardening Tips.

What's in Store for National Home Gardening Club Members?

By Nicky Pilkington

The National Home Gardening Club offer many benefits to its members.

It is said to be the largest home gardening organization with paid membership. For a nominal fee, various benefits are available.

If you choose to become a member the National Home Gardening club, you will be entitled to the following perks.

1. Members can enter competitions to win free gardening products such as gardening accessories, tools, and other gardening supplies.
2. A coupon will be given to members to claim a free gardening shears.
3. Members can also access a free trial subscription of the Gardening How-To Magazine.
4. They may be eligible to test and keep gardening tools such as pruning shears. These are some of the products tested by members in the past two issues of the Gardening How-To magazine:
 - Honda Harmony Lawn Mower
 - Miracle-Gro Garden Weed Preventer
 - Sunflower Garden
 - Cobra Head Precision Weeder and Cultivator
 - Preen 'n Green
5. Members can enjoy a free directory of public gardens, which contains information about lush gardens, arboretums, and conservatories throughout the US.
6. They can interact and talk about tips, ideas and methods with other members.
7. Members can obtain gardening and landscaping tips and plans for the completion of various

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gardening projects.

8. They have access to the members–only gardening website.

9. Members can also preview gardening books, gardening videos, etc.

Indeed, the for–members–only benefits are that grandiose. They are all for the gardening enthusiasts to grab.

After the 30–day trial, you can continue your membership for only \$1 per month.

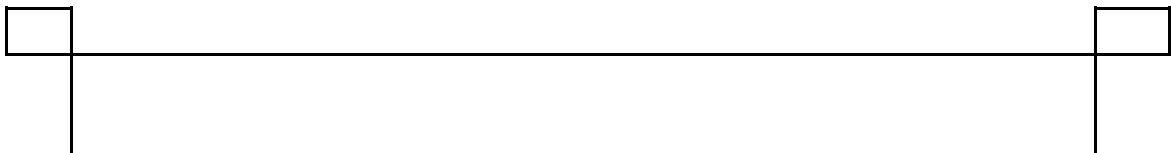
Many garden–lovers think this is a small price to pay for all these privileges.

Find out more about gardening at

<http://aboutgardening.org>



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