

Herb Garden Design – from Fanciful to Formal

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Herb Garden Tips:

- Plant herbs in full sun for best results.
- Place your herb garden in a convenient location.
- Plant the tallest herbs in the back or the center, smaller herbs form the border.
- Bring a notebook with you to the garden center. Record varieties and any cultural info listed.
- Look for contrast in color and texture when selecting herbs for your garden.
- Some herbs can be planted right alongside your veggies:
 - Tomatoes/Peppers/Eggplant: Basil, Oregano, & Parsley
 - Cucumber/Celery/Beans: Rosemary, Sage
 - Lettuce/Cabbage: Rosemary, Sage, Dill, Fennel



Why do you want an herb garden?



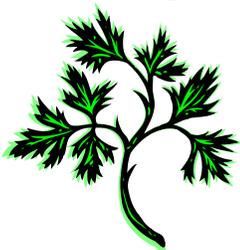
Fresh herbs for cooking? Grow basil, oregano, rosemary, and parsley
Love herbal teas? Grow mint, chamomile, and lemon balm
Medicinal herbs? Grow feverfew, comfrey, echinacea, and calendula
Gourmet flavors? Grow nasturtiums, tarragon, and chocolate mint
Elegant focal point in your yard? Grow purple sage and bronze fennel

Herb Garden Design: (3 main types)

Container Herb Gardens: Herbs are planted in pots, window boxes, or planters. Great choice for beginners or those with limited space. This type of herb garden is portable and can be placed on a deck, patio, or entryway. Fill the pots with a mixture of potting mix and compost. Fertilize herbs lightly during the summer. Containers make it easy to overwinter tender herbs indoors, however, perennial herbs won't last well in pots and grow better in the ground.

Kitchen Herb Gardens: These gardens are easy to grow and maintain. The garden is in close proximity to the kitchen making it easy to harvest fresh herbs while cooking. The design is usually informal, practical, and utilitarian.

Formal Herb Gardens: Formal gardens are as much a work of art as they are a treat for the senses. They usually require more maintenance and pruning to keep them looking nice. The design of a formal garden is very important. The overall shape should be geometric or round. The garden is then divided into equal sections and planted to form a repetitive pattern. There should be a focal point, usually in the center marked by something like a sundial. The rest of the garden design should radiate from that focal point. Use paths or stepping stones to form the basis of the design.



Shapes: Square, Rectangle, Diamond, Circle, Semi-circle, Oval, Triangle

Focal Point: Sundial, bird bath, gazing ball, small fountain, pruned evergreen tree, topiary, or large specimen plant/flower.

Don't forget to add something to your garden that will make it your own. The herb garden is the perfect place for art and whimsy. Some examples are pottery toadstools, a brightly painted chair, decorative solar lights, metal dragonflies on picks, or a ceramic frog or cat. A few structural details will give your garden a fun or magical look.



Putting in your Garden: Time to get to work!

1. Mark the perimeter of your bed and cut through the edges with a spade or shovel.
2. Remove all existing vegetation from the center of the bed. A pitchfork will help!
3. Add plenty of compost and organic matter (such as grass clippings) to the soil. Wood ash and composted manure can also be added. Dig it in well with a pitchfork, shovel, or small tiller.
4. Herbs don't like wet feet! Be sure to mound the soil in the bed to improve drainage.
5. Put the border of your garden on place. Stones, landscape blocks, bricks, and untreated wood frames all work well for edging your garden.
6. Rake the soil to the edging and make sure it still mounds higher in the middle.
7. Arrange your herbs on your bed and plant them. Don't crowd young herbs. Give them plenty of space to grow. Plant herbs in groups of 3-5 for more visual impact.
8. Water the plants in well.

Tip: It is best to transplant on an overcast day or in the cool of the afternoon. If you notice any of your plants wilting in the sun, shade them under a lawn chair for a few days until they get their roots established.

Common Culinary Herbs:

Basil, Chives, Cilantro, Dill, Marjoram, Mint, Oregano, Parsley, Rosemary, Sage, Tarragon, Thyme

Other plants to consider for your herb garden:

Amaranth: 'Love-lies-Bleeding' ornamental red grain tassels, leaves used in salads
Bee Balm (Monarda): attracts hummingbirds, used for tea
Borage: Brilliant blue flowers are edible and make lovely garnishes
Bronze Fennel: Licorice scent, airy bronze-colored foliage.
Chard: Try 'Rainbow Swiss' for color and tasty greens. Frost-tolerant.
Eggplant: Try 'Fairytale' for compact plants and gourmet purple/white streaked fruit
Egyptian Onions: Perennial green onions. Very hardy plants with a tasty onion flavor.
Nasturtiums: Direct-sow. Edible flowers and leaves have a peppery taste.
Ornamental Veggies: Patio Teacup tomato, Black Pearl pepper, Scarlet runner beans
Pansies: Edible flowers make lovely garnishes for cakes and desserts.
Peppers: Sweet and hot varieties. Plants stay compact and love warm weather.
Scented Geraniums: Unique scents and leaf types. Rose, lemon, orange, apple, etc.
Violas: Dainty, edible flowers. Use in salads and garnishes. Frost-tolerant. Self sows.

