

Durham Master Gardeners



<http://www.durhammastergardeners.ca/>

Planting Herbs in a Container

Choosing a container



Choose a container that is large enough for the mature plant and/or mixture of plants. Plant individual pots of herbs in containers not less than 6 inches wide, an 8 or 10 inch is even better. **The smaller the container the faster it will dry out.** Dark containers absorb heat and dry out faster than lighter containers. Containers made of peat stay moist longer than plastic ones. Always use a container with holes to allow for drainage.

Soil

Soilless mixtures are light weight (are easier to move), and have good drainage (most Herbs do not like to sit in water).



Light

Most herbs require 6 hours of sunlight each day. Herbs that like it shady still need light; place them out of direct sunlight but still in a bright location. On really hot days you may need to provide a shade cover or be able to move your herb planters to a shadier location.

Water and Fertilizer

Herb containers will need to be watered regularly, usually daily. Adding compost will help to retain moisture. Adding a slow release fertilizer is usually all that herbs need.

Herbs like chives, parsley, marjoram and mint like the constant moisture level from self-watering containers. Oregano, thyme, rosemary and basil need to dry out between watering, so they are not good candidates for self-watering containers.

Plant Herbs together that have the same growing conditions: light, soil and water.



Herbs for Sunny dry conditions

Basil	Catnip	Caraway
Fennel	Lavender	Marjoram
Oregano	Rosemary	Sage
Summer /Winter Savory	Tarragon (French)	Thyme

Herbs for Sunny moist conditions

Angelica	Bergamot	Cilantro/Coriander	
Chervil	Comfrey	Dill	
Garlic	Lemon balm	Lovage	Leaf lettuce



Herbs for dappled shade

Cilantro/Coriander	Chives	French Sorrel	
Marjoram	Mint	Parsley	Thyme

Herbs for moist shade

Bay Laurel	Chives	Chervil	Lemon Balm	Mint
Parsley	Pennyroyal	Sage		

Angelica, Fennel, Horseradish, Lovage, and Sweet Cicely need very large containers

Herbs that grow easily from seed

Basil	Dill	Parsley
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Choosing Your Herbs

Choose herbs that are free of pest and disease. Plants should be well formed not cropped and tight, nor should they be long and leggy. They should look healthy and have good colour.

Care of Your Herb Container

Water regularly; provide good air circulation and drainage. Harvesting will help to encourage growth.

How to Plant Containers

Your container size should be equivalent to or larger than the mature size of the plant. Leave room for good root growth and any support you might have to add. Remember that *what the pot is made out of* will it hold heat or repel heat.

You might need to use a larger container and add insulation in between the container and the planter pot. Coconut coir, peat moss, or Styrofoam pieces are good options for insulation.

Pots can be made of anything plastic, terra cotta, clay, glass, fibreglass, wood, cement cloth the bigger the better.

Some containers like plastic and cloth will deteriorate in sunlight over the summer and have to be replaced next year.

Consider how you are going to water: try watering from the bottom up using a dish filled with the day's water or an upside down wine bottle.

Self-watering containers work well for most plants as they have a reservoir to hold water for the plant so it doesn't dry out as easily.

Most plants can grow in a container if the size is right but water nutrients and space are limited.

One tomato plant, one pepper, one eggplant in a 5 gallon container.

Add extra calcium to tomatoes (oyster shell egg shell) to get more fruit.

If it is hot move your container into the shade; your plant will thank you.

Unless you are doing a self-watering container they need a drainage hole in the bottom for water to escape.

Container plants need some care as well as water and fertilizer.

Space or raise containers when grouped to get better air circulation for those in the back.

If using a manure tea or seaweed fertilizer you can use a dilute mixture every time you water if using regular fertilizer a dilute mixture every 10 days to 2 weeks.

Fertilizer should be 15– 30 -15.