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## Herbs for A Thanksgiving Feast

With Thanksgiving just around the corner you can just smell the turkey and the stuffing cooking. Oh! I love that stuffing with the smell of herbs and spices. By the end of this newsletter you may be able to use your very own home grown herbs fresh from the windowsill when preparing your holiday feast. Within this newsletter I will help you learn how to grow your own herbs indoors for the winter. What? You say you have no light! That can be fixed with artificial lighting. If you really want I to learn how to grow herbs indoors continue with this informational newsletter. Not only can you use herbs in cooking for the Holidays but use them year round and add fresh flavor to your meals anytime.



Add fresh herbs to your thanksgiving feast.



## Preparing For Your Indoor Herb Garden

First, you are going to have to decide what herbs you would like to grow. Make a list. Then take a look around your house and see which area has the brightest light. You will need at least 4 to 6 hours of sun. Decide whether you have enough light or if you need to purchase equipment for artificial lighting. Then collect your supplies, good potting soil, worm casting (which I'll tell more about this), containers and of course the herbs. So lets go to: "Selecting Your Herbs."

**Decide if you would like herbs for cooking, making tea with or making them to use for a relaxing, soothing bath.**

**Aloe Vera**-Known as the healing herb. Rub fresh juice from the leaves onto cuts and burns and have faster healing and scarring. Great for a sunny windowsill.

**Basil**-Annual that likes a very warm area. Don't plant this one too early outside. Freezes well in ice cube trays. Queen of Siam adds a spicy clove-like flavor to tea.

**Catnip**-Not just for cats. It is also good for relief of cold symptoms and congestion made as a tea. Perennial, very invasive.

**Chives**- Perennial that likes it warm, dry and sunny. High in Vitamin A and C. Also has folic acid, potassium, calcium and iron. Cut fresh pieces to ice cube trays to freeze. Edible flowers. Use at the end of cooking to retain most of the nutrients.

**Coriander**- Coriander is **Cilantro**. The seed is coriander, the leaf is cilantro (Chinese Parsley). 12-18" This herb does bolt in hot weather so you'll want to plant them in succession. Used in Thai, Indian and

Mexican cooking. 4 times more beta-carotene than parsley and 3 times more calcium, protein, minerals, vitamin B and niacin. Biennial.

**Dill**-is an annual that reseeds everywhere if you don't prune the seed heads when ready. It aids in indigestion and improves the appetite. Attracts yellow and black swallowtail butterflies.

**Echinacea**-Purple Cone Flower strengthens the immune system. Full sun to part shade, perennial. Use flowers fresh or dried and only 2 year old roots or older.

**Fennel**-3-4 ft, Bronze fennel makes a nice backdrop. Full sun, hot and dry.

**Feverfew**-Perennial that as a tea is said to be a traditional cure-all. The ferny leaves made as a tea are also a relieve for migraines.

**Lavender**-Easy to grow. Some varieties are hardier than others. Angustifolia "munstead" is one of them. Soothing in baths and sachets for night time rest. Pick flowers just after opening. Drink a light tea 3 times a day for headaches, insomnia, sore throat, anxiety and depression. A basic cure-all they say. 18-36"

**Lemon Balm**- a few fresh leaves put in your afternoon tea will be very refreshing. Lemon Balm drinks a little more water so let this only slightly dry out. Makes a soothing and stimulating tea. An extra strength tea dabbed onto cold sores and acne is beneficial. Does great in poor soil. Perennial.

**Lemon Thyme**-is wonderful baked on fish or mixed in soft cheese spread. Perennial herb grows 6-10" and needs to be clipped every 3-4 years to prevent woodiness.

**Rosemary**-is for remembrance. You can have fun pruning this herb into shapes. Tastes good on chicken and pork. Or put some fresh leaves into a cheese cloth and run it under hot water in the tub. This is a tender perennial and will have to be brought into the house in winter. Doesn't like dry air so needs misting. A cooler room about 50-70\* days and 10\* cooler a night is best.

**Oregano**-is easy to grow perennial. Added to a tomato sauce, yummy. Greek oregano is one of my favorites for cooking. Golden adds nice color in the garden. Puerto Rican has the most refreshing scent. All easy to dry by hanging upside down.

**Parsley**- Parsley is an after dinner breath freshener. Or add it to soups and sauces. Very high in vitamin A and C. Contains folic acid, potassium, and calcium. Use flat parsley for cooking at the last few minutes of the recipe to get the most benefits. Does not like wet soils. Biennial but usually treated as an annual.

**Pineapple Sage**-Excellent in tea. It smells just like pineapples and has a fruity flavor. Grows 24-36" with bright red flowers mid-to late summer.

**Any remedy I may have listed are only references and not intended as medical advice. Always talk to your doctor first. [www.pattysplants.com](http://www.pattysplants.com)**

## Patty's Favorites for a Cozy Cup of Tea

### MINTS—

Mints are one of the most popular herbal tea ingredients because of their full-bodied, sharp, refreshing flavors and aromas. They are easy to grow but tend to want to grow anywhere. If you want them to stay in control, you might want to grow them in large terra-cotta containers. These can be planted right in the garden to help contain them. Mints are very hardy and usually survive even the worse winters. In a trouble spot like a steep hillside, they would be very happy taking over. Removing a patch would be best done in the spring when the ground is soft. The roots grow close to the surface and are easier to pull. Use in sauces, sprinkled in salads, even dessert recipes. May not want to plant them next to each other unless there is some kind of divider. **Shade Tolerate. Put in ice cube trays to add to sun tea.**

**Chocolate peppermint**—Smells like a peppermint patty, but it really doesn't have a chocolate taste.

**Peppermint**—Has a very strong menthol flavor and is wonderful for an upset tummy.

**Orange mint**—Citrus aroma and fruity taste. Blends wonderfully with lemon verbena, lemon balm and pineapple sage for a refreshing summer drink. Hot or cold. 2 ft

**Spearmint**—Mildly menthol, also very soothing. Spearmint leaves are pointed, smooth and hairless. It grows about 12 inches tall.

**Apple mint**—A fruity apple flavor. This mint has very large leaves so you don't need much when making tea. A couple of leaves only. Apple mint gets 2 feet high.

**Pineapple Mint**—If you love pineapple this is the one for you.. Blend it with pineapple sage and make into iced tea. Don't forget to add slices of fresh pineapple too! Yum, Yum This mint has fuzzy variegated leaves and grows 2 feet tall.

### Other Great Herb for Making Tea

**Anise hyssop**—Lightly licorice. Use this with apple mint and a cinnamon stick for a spicy winter-time drink. Sometimes called licorice mint but is not a real mint. It grows 4 feet and has fuzzy blue bullet shaped flowers. It needs to be used as a back drop plant. This is also hardy. **Can take some shade but prefers sun. Blooms June to September with 2" long purplish spikes of tiny flowers.**

**Bee balm**-Bergamot is a tall perennial to be used is a back drop. It needs good air circulation or it can get powdery mildew. Can take afternoon shade. Helpful with nausea and vomiting. You can use both the flowers and the leaves. **Make your own Earl Grey with the leaves and flowers. Just mix with English Breakfast tea.**

**Borage**—Annual. All you need is one plant because it will reseed everywhere. The flowers are edible and can be frozen in ice cube trays to be put in ice tea or lemonade.

It's said borage tea is a good remedy for colds, flu, and reducing fevers. **24"+ Bright blue flowers. May control tomato horn worm. Candied flowers too.**

**Chamomile**—Has an lightly floral favor. A nighttime tea to calm the nerves. Chamomile only grows 8 inches tall, with ferny-like leaves and tiny daisy flowers.

The flowers are what you use to make your calming tea. Since this tea is made from the flowers some people may be allergic it. (Pollen)

## More.....

**Lemon balm**— A soft lemon taste. Add this to green or black tea for a little extra touch. Lemon balm grows about a foot or so high. You need to cut it back before it flowers to maintain its shape and keep seeds from forming as it reseeds itself very well. It is in the mint family and is hardy. Eases stuffiness, steam and breath in.

**Lemongrass**— Very strong in lemon flavor. Great added to tea and excellent in cooking. This grows very tall and is not hardy. If you want to grow some indoors, divide it and plant it in a container, put in a sunny area.

**Lemon verbena**— Another very strong lemony flavor. Lemon verbena is considered a tender perennial. But here in Wisconsin it must come in the house for the winter, in a nice sunny location. **Holds its scent for a very long time after drying . 2-4 ft.**

**Sage— Salvia officinalis-** Made as a tea mixed with vinegar is good for sore throats when gargled. It was thought to promote longevity in the middle ages. Said to reduce sweating. It is only safe in small doses, don't drink more than one week at a time. Perennial that likes sun. Pineapple sage an annual, is good in a tea mixed with lemon verbena, orange mint, anise hyssops and a little cinnamon for added spice. Good on a cold winters night.

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## How To Grow Herbs Indoors

**Lighting:** Herbs will grow very well inside your home or apartment provided there is the right amount of light. Sunny south windows are the best, but if you only have east or west will do. **Fluorescent lights are better than incandescent because they give off less heat. An inexpensive shop light with two standard 48" tubes will be enough for several pots. Hang or mount it 6" above the top of the tallest plants. Raise shorter plants up. Get a timer or turn it off after 14 hrs. or so.**

**Plants that work well in artificial :** Sweet bay, lemon verbena, eucalyptus, curry, lemon grass, pineapple sage, and scented

**Geraniums. Windowsill plants include:** Rosemary, tarragon, lemon balm, sage, thyme, oregano, bay, and aloe Vera.

**Containers;** There are many containers that will work for herbs. Terra-cotta, plastic, metal (like an old soup can), an old shoe or boot, and a clay strawberry jar. By using a clay pot there is less chance of over watering because the clay absorbs the extra moisture. Plastic pots hold moisture longer. Always make sure the containers have good drainage holes. The container should also be slightly larger than the root ball. **Note: Use tubing with holes in down to center of strawberry jar for easier watering.**

**Soil:** A soil-less potting mix is a good start. I prefer to add some worm casting or composted manure. Herbs like a little heavier mix and worm castings give them the natural nutrients they need.

**Note: Always use moist soil whenever potting, It is easier to work with, it doesn't fly up in your face and you won't have to add extra soil after it settles. Humidity**

Herbs like humidity. Most homes tend to be very dry in the winter. If you have an humidifier great, if not you can create it by using a tray with pebbles and water filled in it. Just make sure the container is sitting above the water level.

### Water

You will have to watch your herbs closely. Some dry out faster than others. However, most like to be on the dry side. Many more plants have been killed by over watering. Always feel the soil first.

Use a wooden chopstick to test if your herbs need water. Stick it down in the container, when you pull it up is it wet or dry? This will help you will know when to water.

### **Fertilize**

Fertilize once every two weeks with 15-30-15. Or herbs love fish emulsion , the smell goes away after an hour or so. If you've used worm casting in the potting mix you won't need to fertilize all winter.

**Homemade fertilizer**– Use crush eggshells and add to the top of the soil or blend them with veggie peels, lettuce and a little water. Liquefy –and serve to your herbs for dinner.

### **Insecticide**

Herbs can be sprayed weekly with a solution of a dish soap and water whether they have any bugs or not. This helps keep pests down to a minimum. See Topic of “Homemade Insecticides and Fungicides.” at; [www.pattysplants.com](http://www.pattysplants.com)

### **Seed starting**

Basil, parsley, dill, fennel, cilantro all work for indoor seed starting . These you don't even need to separate if to crowded in the pot, they grow better that way. You need a warm spot with a plastic cover on them until they germinate. Once they do, move them to an indirect window for the first 3-7 days then after about 10 days move to an even sunnier spot.

Herbs may not grow as lush as they do inside as they do outside but they will grow and you can use them anytime you need to be refreshed.

Even if you don't want to cook with them — just smelling them can brighten even the worst of moods. So have fun, experiment !

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## **Mom's Thanksgiving Turkey Stuffing Recipe**

My mom always cooks the giblets to make a broth first.. Then she adds a little of the broth to moisten the stuffing. Here's how:

### **Giblet Broth**

Cook giblets in 3 cups water with a little chopped onion and chopped celery, add 1/2 t. salt, sprinkle in a dash of pepper, a pinch of powdered cloves and a small bay leaf. Simmer for 5-10 minutes. Use this to add flavor to gravy, instead of milk for the mashed potatoes or to moisten the stuffing.

### **Turkey Stuffing**

3/4 chopped onion  
1.5 cup chopped celery  
1 cup butter or margarine  
8 cups bread cubes (softened with a little broth)  
3 t. salt  
1.5 t. dried sage leaves crushed  
1 t. dried thyme leaves crushed  
1/2 t. pepper  
3 cups finely cropped apples  
3/4 cups dried cranberries

Cook and stir onion and celery in butter or margarine. Stir in about 1/3 of the bread crumbs. Put into a large bowl and mix in some broth to moisten. Add the rest of the bread cubes and more broth if needed. Stuff the turkey just before roasting. Or put in a greased oven safe dish. You can also cook in heavy tin foil for less clean up mess. Cook in dish or foil 1/2 to 1 hour at 325.

You can find more articles on Herbs at:  
[www.pattysplants.com](http://www.pattysplants.com) or by e-mailing  
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