



HERBS FOR FOLIAGE AND FRAGRANCE

Are you looking for a way to spice up your containers? Can your borders use a dash of something different? Add some herbs to your planting mix. Most are attractive, fragrant, and easy to grow—and they're great to have handy when creating those culinary masterpieces.

Basil

Basil is a must in any cook's garden. It is easy to grow in any sunny, well-drained spot if watered and harvested regularly—and it adores summers heat!

Perk up a pot with a planting of 'Purple Ruffles.' Its vibrant color and wavy leaves are the perfect contrast to silvery-leafed companions like dusty miller or licorice plant. Its sweet, spicy taste is great in salads, and its deep purple foliage makes a pretty contrast to other salad greens.

For a lemon scent and flavor, plant some 'Sweet Dani.' Its small size and mounded habit make this variety a neat edging plant for containers or for the border. Its delightful lemony leaves are also great for potpourri.

Mint

Mints are vigorous, fabulously fragrant, attractive perennials. Extremely easy to grow in sun to part shade, they require little care other than regular watering and occasional clipping to keep them tidy. These hardy herbs are best planted in containers or in a confined area, as they spread quickly by runners. Still, they are well worth having for their beauty and their deliciously cool, refreshing scent. As an added bonus, mints are said to repel insect and rodent pests.

'Pineapple' is a highly ornamental variety with striking, green and white variegated leaves and a sweet pineapple scent. Its upright, trailing branches look lovely spilling over the edges of containers, window boxes or hanging baskets.

'Corsican' mint is a perfect choice for the rock garden or between steppingstones. This diminutive, low-growing variety sports tiny, fragrant, bright green leaves, and its good behavior makes it safe to plant in the garden. The original flavor for crème de menthe, it has a strong peppermint taste and scent.

Parsley

Not just a garnish anymore, parsley's perky green foliage is a natural for hanging baskets or window boxes. Plant it by itself or combine it with colorful, edible flowers like nasturtiums or pansies.

Parsley prefers full to part sun and rich, moist, well-drained soil.

Rosemary

Rosemary is a delightful herb—it has a wonderful piney fragrance, lovely, delicate flowers, and attractive, needle-like, fine-textured foliage. Its makes a great seasoning for poultry, lamb, eggs and vegetables.

'Arp' is a silvery, strongly upright variety outstanding as the centerpiece of an herbal container, and it's perfect for topiaries, too.

Plant the trailing variety 'Huntington Carpet' to cascade out of a basket, urn or strawberry jar. It features sky blue flowers over silvery foliage.

Locate rosemary in a sunny area and give it excellent drainage. Do not over-fertilize. Rosemary is a tender perennial treated as an annual or brought inside to over-winter.

Sage

The soft, velvety leaves of garden sage add wonderful texture to the garden or to containers, and they release a spicy, woody aroma when brushed. Weave some into herbal wreaths, and use to season meats and poultry.

'Berggarten' is a dense, mounding variety grown for its large, gray-green leaves—great as a backdrop for brightly colored blooms. Golden Sage is highly ornamental, with green and gold variegated leaves, pretty all by itself or in combination with more fine-textured herbs. Plant some Purple Sage among silver-foliaged herbs for a lovely color contrast, or fill a large pot with 'Tricolor' Sage for its variegated green, pink and white foliage.

All sages prefer full sun and well-drained soil. Some, such as 'Berggarten,' are perennial here, and others may not survive our winters. Clip perennial varieties back hard in spring.

Thyme

Every garden has room for a

little thyme, and it is an easy herb to grow in any sunny, well-drained spot. Most types are perennial.



This simple but attractive pot is planted with oregano, sage, and ornamental peppers.

'Doone Valley' has golden-variegated leaves and pale purple flowers. Use it to add a lemony flavor to recipes. 'Silver Queen' is also lemon-scented, with variegated green and cream foliage and lavender-pink flowers. Both varieties perform well in containers, in the rock garden, or along the edges of a path or walkway.

For a different texture, try 'Woolly' Thyme. At only two to

three inches tall, it's great for planting between stepping-stones.

Lavender

No herb garden would be complete without the intoxicating scent of lavender—and it is an excellent choice for the flower border as well. The key to success with this herb is to plant it in a sunny spot with *very* good drainage.

English lavenders such as 'Munstead' or 'Hidcote' are perennial in our zone. They have silvery foliage and bloom in summer; 'Munstead' has lavender-blue flowers and 'Hidcote' has dark purple blooms.

Spanish Lavender is not reliably hardy here, but it is still worth growing. Try 'Otto Quast,' with deep purple bracts and dark lavender flowers on fragrant, dense, 18 to 24" plants.

Don't forget to harvest some flowers as they open. They dry very well and retain their scent for a long time. Simply hang them upside down out of bright light to dry.