

Herb and Spices



Appendix 1 - Some Common Culinary Herbs

Name	Propagation	Culture	Use	Growth Habit	Harvest
Anise <i>Pimpinella anisum</i>	Seed; use fresh seed.	Likes sun, space 15-20 cm apart.	Green leaves and seeds in salads, meats, bakery goods: tastes somewhat like licorice.	Annual, slow growing, flowers in flat clusters; finely-cut lobed leaves.	Use leaves fresh; harvest seeds when ripe, remove from stems and store.
Borage <i>Borago officinalis</i>	Seed; sow direct in spring.	Likes dry, sunny site; will self-sow.	Leaves have mild cucumber flavor; used in salads, pickles, in eggs, and with fresh flower sprays in fruit drinks. Flowers also are edible.	Annual, bushy plant, growing to one metre in height; blue flowers are ornamental.	Pick blossoms as they open; leaves are used fresh. Seeds are a source of gamma linolenic acid.
Caraway <i>Carum carvi</i>	Seed; sow in spring or fall.	Full sun; light soil; seeds produced second year. Prone to blossom blight.	Seeds used to flavor bread, pastry, meat, soups, sauces, confections, cheese.	Biennial, but annual strains exist. Feathery foliage; creamy flowers resemble carrot.	Dry seed heads; harvest seeds in autumn (second year if biennial).
Catnip <i>Nepeta cataria</i>	Seed; sow shallowly; root division, cuttings.	Easy, not fussy as to soil, best in full sun. More aromatic in sandy soil.	Not really culinary, used in toys for cats or medicinally as tea. Lemon catnip is of more culinary value.	Perennial, height 30-160 cm. Erect, large-toothed leaves and small whitish or pinkish flower spikes, attracts bees.	Fresh or dried leaves; or flowering tops, from midsummer onwards.
Chamomile, German <i>Matricaria recutita</i>	See Appendix 2.				
Chervil <i>Anthriscus cerefolium</i>	Seed; sow in fall and spring for succession of greens.	Partial shade; rich organic soil, moist.	Leaves usually used fresh in salads, soups, omelets or as garnish.	Annual. Leaves are parsley-like, ferny. Goes to seed quickly.	Leaves are harvested and best used fresh; can be frozen for later use.
Chives <i>Allium schoenoprasum</i>	Seed or division of clumps.	Rich, moist soil, full sun, culture similar to onions.	Leaves mainly used fresh or freeze-dried, in salads and seasonings.	Perennial, from bulbs. Long narrow leaves, edible flowers.	Leaves and/or flowers used fresh or dried.
Cilantro/Coriander <i>Coriandrum sativum</i>	Seed; sometimes transplanted.	Full sun, light soil, needs lots of space.	Leaves in salads, meat dishes; seeds for spices in baking, dressings.	Annual; upright, pinkish-white flowers, aromatic foliage.	Cilantro leaves are picked fresh before flowering; coriander seed harvested in fall before shattering.
Cress <i>Lepidium sativum</i>	Seed; sow shallowly and repeatedly.	Easy, likes moist, rich soil and cool weather.	Leaves used fresh in salads, soups, sandwiches, eggs or as sprouts or garnish.	Annual, fast growing to 30 cm, with dissected or curly foliage; flowers are small, white.	Leaves or entire top harvested before bloom. Becomes very peppery in hot weather.

Dill <i>Anethum graveolens</i>	Seed; repeat sowings for summer-long supply. Select leaf varieties if seed production is not desired.	Sow early; needs rich soil and plenty of space, full sun.	Leaves used for salads; fresh leaves and seed heads for pickles; after drying use to season meats, fish, vegetables, pizza.	Annual, to one m in height; feathery foliage; rampant grower.	Leaves best just as flowers open; harvest seeds as soon as ripe, cut off whole plant and hang to dry.
Fennel <i>Foeniculum vulgare</i>	Seed; directly in soil.	Sow early; likes hot, sandy, rich soil, needs lots of space.	All parts of leaves, stems and seeds aromatic; used for fish seasonings and sauces.	Annual, resembles dill.	Flower stalks harvested just before bloom; leaves best used fresh; seeds dried as for dill.
Fenugreek <i>Trigonella foenum-graecum</i>	Seed.	Requires well-drained, medium textured loam of moderate fertility, full sun and warm weather.	Seeds used as a spice, such as in curries, pickles, stews and soups or as artificial maple flavoring.	Annual with pea-like foliage, 30-60 cm; flowers pale yellow or white, pods long and narrow with 10-20 oblong seeds.	Seed harvested in fall when mature.
Garlic <i>Allium sativum</i>	Sets; planted as onions.	Well-drained soil, full sun, keep moist. Plant in fall and mulch, or mid April.	Chopped cloves for seasoning meats, vegetables, soups, salads; garlic salt from pulverized cloves.	Perennial but harvested annually; hardneck types produce flower heads; flat, onion-like leaves; bulbs consist of cloves.	Dig bulbs in late summer, dry well.
Giant Hyssop <i>Agastache foeniculum</i>	Seed, best started indoors; also divisions and cuttings.	Adaptable to many soils but dislikes wet locations; full sun.	Leaves used in teas, to flavor peas, lamb, fruit salads; flowers also used.	Perennial or annual to 1.5 m; stiffly erect with large toothed leaves; blue flower spikes attract bees.	Harvest anytime during growing season. Leaves and flowers may be used fresh or dried.
Good King Henry <i>Chenopodium bonus-henricus</i>	Seed or transplants.	Easy, will grow almost anywhere but does best on rich, moist soil.	Young shoots eaten like asparagus and leaves used as spinach.	Perennial to about 75 cm; large arrow-shaped leaves; flowers small, greenish.	Young shoots may be blanched before cutting. They may need peeling. Fresh young leaves picked just before use.
Horseradish <i>Armoracia rusticana</i>	Root division in fall or root cuttings in spring.	Deep sandy loam, moist soil is best but will grow in most soils. Full sun or light shade.	Young roots ground and used in sauces or relishes. Rarely, blanched leaves are used in salads.	Long-lived perennial best grown as annual or biennial; erect plant with long-stalked, oblong leaves and a long taproot.	Dig roots in late fall and store at 0° C. Cleaning and grating of roots should be done outdoors; once grated, vinegar and/or cream should be added.
Lavender <i>Lavandula angustifolia</i>	Seed or cuttings.	Sun and poor soil for most fragrance; avoid wet sites; may need winter protection.	Rarely culinary; mostly for ornament or sachets; flowers used fresh or dried.	Perennial; somewhat woody, gray-green leaves and blue or purple flower spikes.	Cut and dry whole flower spikes when flowers begin to open; do not use excessive or prolonged heat when drying.

Lemon Balm <i>Melissa officinalis</i>	Seed (very slow); root divisions or cuttings.	Moist, well-drained soil, but tolerates light, dry soil. Full sun or partial shade.	Leaves used in salads, sandwiches, soups, stews, meats, egg dishes, vegetable dishes, vinegars, desserts and beverages; also medicinal uses.	Somewhat tender perennial, often winterkilling in Saskatchewan. Plants low, bushy, with oval, toothed leaves. Small, tubular white flowers on overwintered plants.	Harvest early in season or cut back plants to promote fresh growth which has best flavor. Cut entire tops and dry by hanging in shade.
Lemon Verbena <i>Lippia citriodora</i>	Cuttings.	Tender shrub, full sun outdoors, winter indoors.	Leaves for fragrance and to give lemony taste to beverages.	Narrow, shiny leaves, lemon scented; not hardy on the prairies.	Strip leaves individually from plant; dry on screens.
Lovage <i>Levisticum officinale</i>	Seed (slow) or transplants; root division. Fresh seed is important.	Deep, fertile, moist, well-drained soil. Full sun or light shade. Very hardy.	Leaves used as celery substitute in soups, salads, casseroles, stir-fries. Seeds sometimes used.	Very large perennial to two m or more, resembling celery. Small yellow-green flowers in heads like dill.	Leaves harvested at any time, used fresh or dried. Seed stalks can be cut when turning brown and dried.
Mint <i>Mentha spicata</i> <i>Mentha x piperita</i> <i>Mentha x gracilis</i>	Stolons; seed strains are of inferior quality.	Full sun or semi-shade, rich moist soil. Variable hardiness.	Teas, mint sauce, candy.	Perennial, but peppermint requires winter protection; purple flowers, spreads rapidly by stolons; menthol odor.	Pick leaves individually; use fresh or dried; pick just as flowering begins.
Oregano <i>Origanum vulgare</i>	Seed or division.	Grows well in poor soil, full sun.	Fresh or dried leaves as meat or vegetable seasoning; used in pizza.	Perennial, although superior types such as greek oregano rarely winter on the prairies. Soft, rounded leaves, in clumps up to 2 feet high.	Cut stalks when plant starts to flower; hang to dry 2 weeks; remove leaves, crumble and store.
Parsley <i>Petroselinum crispum</i>	Seed; sow early inside.	Medium rich soil; sun or part shade.	Seasoning for soups, meats, salads; garnishes.	Biennial but grown as an annual on the prairies. Plain leaf Italian parsley is taller and considered more flavorful; curly leaf parsley is short and compact.	Harvest anytime when plants are of sufficient size; use fresh or freeze; drying is the least preferred method of preservation.
Rosemary <i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i>	Slow from seed; stem cuttings.	Grow in greenhouse or outdoors in summer only; full sun; good drainage required.	Seasoning for foods, especially poultry.	Tender shrub grown in pots or greenhouse beds; upright to trailing, evergreen with narrow leaves and blue or pink flowers in season.	Cut branches when of sufficient size; dry slowly; avoid excessive heat; freezing not recommended.
Sage <i>Salvia officinalis</i>	Seed, stem cuttings or crown divisions.	Full sun, well-drained soil.	Seasoning for meat or in poultry stuffing.	Grey, shrubby perennial; semi-hardy on the prairies; woody, sprawling habit, blue flowers, leaves woolly.	Cut leaves or leafy tops when flowers begin; dry. Avoid late fall harvest to lessen chance of winter injury.

Summer Savory <i>Satureja hortensis</i>	Seed.	Full sun, medium rich soil.	Seasoning for soups, sauces, egg or bean dishes.	Annual, with upright but sprawling habit, small mauve flowers and pungent leaves.	Cut stalks when starting to flower or cut tops when in bud; hang to dry. Freezing not recommended.
Sweet Basil <i>Ocimum basilicum</i>	Seed. Genovese is considered one of the best.	Grow in greenhouse year round or transplant outdoors in June; resents cold weather, needs sun.	Seasoning for soups, salads, vegetables and meats.	Annual, bushy plants with green or purple leaves and white or purple flowers late in season. Many varieties exist, differing in flavor, size, colour.	Cut stalks or individual leaves as plants become large enough; best before flowering. Dry for two weeks.
Sweet Marjoram <i>Origanum majorana</i>	Seed, or cuttings.	Start indoors and transplant out in spring. Full sun.	Leaves used for seasoning meat dishes.	Tender perennial, grown as an annual, low bushy habit to 30 cm; grayish-green leaves and tiny white flowers.	Cut stalks when starting to flower; hang in dark area to dry.
Tarragon (French) <i>Artemisia dracunculoides</i>	Division of roots. French tarragon cannot be grown from seed.	Plant outdoors in well-drained soil in full sun; requires a winter period to maintain vigour.	Leaves used in sauces, sea foods to impart a slight licorice flavor.	Perennial, to one m, upright but may be sprawling.	Young leaves and stem tips are harvested and used fresh (preferably) or dried.
Thyme <i>Thymus vulgaris</i>	Seed or cuttings, or by division.	Slow growing, start indoors early and transplant out in spring; light soil and full sun best. Winter mulch.	Leaves and stem tips used as seasoning in soups, sauces, vegetable and meat dishes.	Semi-tender perennial with shrubby habit, growing to 20 cm.	Harvest tops anytime during summer; hang to dry.