

Fresh Connections in Urban Agriculture

Indoor Herb Gardening

Herb gardens are an easy way to provide yourself with fresh herbs

KITCHEN HERB GARDENING

Herb gardening starts with the same principles as any other gardening. Start with a plan on what you want to grow, obtain healthy soil, and appropriately sized container (or even multiple containers depending on space), adequate sunlight and water. Plant according to packaging directions. All harvested herbs can be used fresh, dried or even frozen for later use. They are considered recipe enhancers and add flavor to cooked dishes.

HERBS

Herbs gardens are an easy way to introduce fresh, flavorful additions to your cooking. Start by placing damp soil in your container(s), plant your seeds or started herb plant per packaging directions. Then put your container where it will get plenty of sunlight but will be readily available to trim fresh herbs from for recipes. Common herbs to use in every day cooking are:

Basil– used to flavor soup, stews, tomato dishes, meat, game, fish, herb butters, pesto, Italian recipes, and herb vinegars. Harvesting can begin when the plant matures, around 4-5 weeks. Harvest the leaves from the top down, without taking more than one third of the plant height. It is important to cut or pinch right above a leaf pair so you don't leave a stub. This will allow the plant to continue to produce.



Chives– as a member of the onion and garlic family, has a similar, yet more mild flavor. The leaves can be used in dips, soups, stews, salads, and as a garnish. They do grow to be tall though (10-12”), so an independent pot may be preferred. Harvesting can be done by cutting the leaf an inch above the soil level. The flowers can be harvested and used as an edible garnish.



Cilantro– quite often used in Latin and Indian recipes. It is frequently added to rice, can be used to add flavor to sour cream, mayonnaise, olive oil, or salad dressing, and is an essential ingredient in a fresh home-made salsa. When the plant gets to be about 6” tall you can harvest the entire plant just an inch above soil level. If allowed to mature, the cilantro seeds are coriander.

Dill– is typically used to enhance food dishes like soups, eggs, lamb, fish and pickling recipes (both foliage and seeds). Dill also grows relatively tall and has feathery greenery. The leaves can be harvested as soon as they appear. Some people even harvest the seeds 2-3 weeks after the blossoms appear and store them in a sealed container until ready to use.



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