

Gray Barn Green Thumb Guide



Herbs are a delicious addition to the vegetable or border garden. They are productive, like vegetables, but in the right spot can add texture and scent to your garden beds. Herbs like full sun and well drained soil. Below are some of our favorites:

- Basil:** Basil is an annual and sensitive to temperatures around and below 50 degrees. It also doesn't like to be overwatered. Keep the soil evenly moist and pinch off flowers when they appear. Use the leaves for pesto or any dish that could use a dash of summer!
- Bay:** Bay is an evergreen shrub that will show damage after extreme low temperatures. You will also see browning leaves on plants that are in poor, wet soil. If your bay plant is happy, it can get quite large, to 10 feet or more. Dry bay leaves for using in soups, stews and sauces.
- Chives:** Chives are perennial with a mild onion flavor. Snip from the bottom outside of the plant to maintain an evenly shaped plant. Flowers are edible too and may self sow.
- Cilantro:** Cilantro is a necessity for taco night. This annual herb is best started from seed once the danger of frost is past. Cilantro can go into flower quickly. Once it does, the leaves begin to lose their flavor. Be sure to pinch off flower heads as soon as they start to form and plant in rotations.
- Dill:** Dill is an annual that can reach three to four feet tall. Dill will bolt in hot weather and stop producing leaves. To prevent this during a warm spell, keep the soil moist and this is less likely to happen. Great flavor, especially for fish dishes, soups and essential for pickling.
- Marjoram:** Sweet marjoram is an annual and Italian marjoram is a perennial. Both are very easy to grow and used heavily in meat, tomato, and Italian dishes.
- Mint:** The MOST important thing to remember with mint is to ALWAYS plant it in a pot. If you plant it in the ground, you will have mint for ever because it will try and take over your yard! There are many flavors of mint including, orange, lime and even chocolate. If you are making mojitos, the best mint is Kentucky Colonel which has a larger leaf, good for muddling.
- Oregano:** Oregano is another very easy to grow perennial herb, except for Greek oregano which is an annual. Make sure to taste any oregano that you might buy to check the flavor. The flavor will vary from variety to variety.
- Parsley:** Parsley is an essential annual herb. Its fresh flavor will brighten up any dish from fish to meat. Parsley can be planted in the garden to make a large clump or in a pot by the kitchen door. Close to the kitchen is preferable because you'll want to put it in everything! Pull leaves from the outside of the plant to encourage growth from within.

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- Rosemary:** Rosemary is a perennial but needs winter protection and very well drained soil. 'Arp' is one of the most cold-hardy varieties, hardy to -10 F. There are many varieties to choose from including upright or trailing habits. Use trailing varieties in rockeries and containers.
- Sage:** Sage is a perennial, evergreen shrub. It is a reliable plant that looks great in the border. Sage needs to be replaced every three years or so, as it will get rangy and sparse looking with age. There are many varieties available, including those with colored and larger leaves.
- Tarragon:** Tarragon is a perennial with pretty, green foliage that will make a clump two by two feet. The plant can be floppy so it's worth providing support for the pretty and tasty leaves. Use in fish or chicken dishes, and in vinegars.
- Thyme:** Thyme is an easy low maintenance perennial that likes to be in a pot or in the ground. Enjoy the leaves in many dishes year-round since the plant is evergreen. Grows two to four inches tall and two feet wide.

Resources: [Western Garden Book of Edibles](#) by Sunset Publishing, 2010