

An Herbal Primer

BASIL: annual, full sun, 12 inches apart, pH 5 to 7; dry leaves in a warm, dark location, then store in an airtight container.

BEE BALM: perennial, sun/shade, 12 inches apart, pH 6 to 8; pick leaves before blossoms, hanging them up to dry before storage.

CHAMOMILE: perennial, full sun, 5 to 6 inches apart, pH 6 to 7; pick leaves before the flowers, drying thoroughly before storage in airtight container.

CHERVIL: annual, shade, 6 to 8 inches apart, pH 6.5 to 7; pick leaves before the flowers, drying thoroughly before storage in airtight container.

CHIVE: perennial, sun, 8 to 10 inches apart, pH 6 to 8; cut leaves prior to using them, otherwise in plastic bag.

CORIANDER: annual, full sun, 10 inches apart, pH 6 to 7; pick leaves prior to flowering, dry and store in airtight container.

DILL: annual, full sun, 8 inches apart, pH 5 to 6.5; harvest leaves just prior to use, drying first with a paper towel, then in a sealed paper bag in a refrigerator until leaves are bone dry, then in an airtight container. Seed is taken in late summer when stems are cut to the ground; place stems in a paper bag, closed at the top, then place atop the hot water heater for several weeks to dry, after which seed is stored in the airtight container.

FENNEL: annual, full sun, 12 inches apart, pH 6 to 8; pick leaves as they mature, but before flowers happen. Finger-pinch stem after picking the leaf to delay flowering and promote growth of more leaves. Dry leaves, then store in airtight container.

HOREHOUND: perennial, full sun, 8 to 10 inches apart, pH 6 to 8; pick leaves and flowers, drying them in an enclosed, warm garage; store in airtight container.

HYSSOP: perennial, full sun, 15 to 20 inches apart, pH 6 to 8; pick leaves and flowers, drying them in an enclosed garage; store in airtight container.

LAVENDER: perennial, full sun, 15 - 20 inches apart, pH 6 to 7; pick flowers as they start to open, hanging upside down in a paper bag in an enclosed garage to dry for a week.

MARJORAM: annual, full sun, 12 inches apart, pH 6 to 7; pick leaves to use right away, otherwise dry in warm location before storing in airtight container.

OREGANO: annual, full sun, 12 inches apart, pH 6 to 7. Pick leaves before flowers happen, drying in an airy, cool location prior to storing in an airtight container.

PARSLEY: annual, sun/part shade, 7 to 8 inches apart, pH 6 to 7; pick leaves as needed, wrapping in a paper towel and stored in a refrigerator.

ROSEMARY: annual, sun/part shade, 14 to 18 inches apart, pH 6 to 8; pick leaves before flowering, drying in a cool location prior to storage in an airtight container.

SAGE: perennial, sun/part shade, 14 to 18 in. apart, pH 6 to 7, pick leaves before the first flowers, again in late summer; dry leaves in an enclosed garage prior to storing in airtight container.

SUMMER SAVORY: annual, full sun, 6 inches apart, pH 6 to 8; pinch flower buds as they happen to force more leaf growth. Pick leaves before flowers develop, drying inside a paper bag in an enclosed garage; store in airtight container.

TARRAGON: perennial, sun/part shade, 20 - 24 in. apart, pH 6 to 7.5; pick leaves tenderly, drying in paper bags in the enclosed garage; store dried leaves in airtight container.

THYME: perennial, full sun, 10 - 12 in. apart, pH 5 to 7; pick leaves before flowers; dry in warm location, storing in airtight container.

WORMWOOD: perennial, full sun, 16-20 in. apart, pH 6 to 8; prune stem to the soil when it starts to flower; dry leafy parts in paper bag in enclosed garage, storing in airtight container. Stops moths in clothes closets and dresser drawers.