

# Culinary Herbs

Herbs by definition are garden plants that provide flavoring and seasoning to food. For this use, fresh herbs have no culinary equivalent.

The oils in the herbs that create the characteristic flavor are most intense when the herbs are fresh. Dried herbs, which have lost some of their oils, have culinary value, but they are NOT a substitute for the intense aroma and taste that fresh herbs bring to food.

## **Location:**

Most herbs require full sun. A few herbs will take morning sun and afternoon shade, or very bright filtered sun all day. Examples include: salad burnet, parsley and chives.

Herbs can be successfully grown in pots in small spaces such as on a patio, deck or balcony. They also thrive in the ground when planted among showy perennials and roses or mixed with vegetables.

## **Harvest:**

Generally speaking, you can harvest herbs when its essential oils are at their peak, anytime BEFORE the plant begins to flower. Once flowers are allowed to form, the plant devotes energy to seed production and the quality of the foliage deteriorates.

Herb leaves are best picked in the morning after the dew has dried instead of at the end of the day when their oils have been depleted by hot afternoon sun.

Don't wait until herb plants mature to full growth to begin harvesting leaves. Enjoy herbs every day by cutting off leaves on young plants. By picking leaves often, you are lightly pruning herbs plants, making them full and bushy and keeping flowers from developing too soon.

Always use sharp scissors when harvesting herbs or preparing them for use. Otherwise you will needlessly crush their delicate leaves.

## **Herbs in Pots:**

Herbs thrive in pots! Choose the right size pot for the growth habit of each herb, allowing plenty of depth for deep rooted herbs. Don't try to grow TOO MANY plants in one pot. Find out the mature size of each herb and plant accordingly.