



How to create a herb garden

Making a simple kids' herb garden is a brilliant activity ... what could be better than having your hands in the dirt - and learning something, too!

Herbs are nature's little multi-taskers. Not only do they add wonderful flavours to our food, they're also packed with goodness.

Creating a simple herb garden teaches your children about how plants grow and about the seasons of the year, and it's also a great lesson in responsibility. Plus, how can having your hands in the dirt *not* be fun?

We've opted for a potted garden - using eight herbs - to make it even easier. Choose a spot that gets plenty of sunshine.

Herbs look great and taste even better.





What you need:

- Children's gardening gloves
- 8 x 16cm pots (terracotta or plastic)
- Potting mix
- 8 x herb seedlings

For markers:

- Craft sticks
- Coloured felt pens
- Black permanent marker

Creating your garden

1. Wearing gardening gloves, three-quarter fill the pots with potting mix.
2. Squeeze the sides of each seedling container to loosen the soil, then gently slip the herb into your hands.
3. Carefully release the roots of the plant, then place the herb into the centre of the pot. Fill almost to the top with potting mix (leaving about a 3cm gap), pressing the soil lightly around the plant to ensure it's nice and secure. Water thoroughly.
4. Time to get crafty: make individual herb markers by colouring craft sticks with felt pen and writing the name of each herb in black permanent marker.

Keeping your herbs healthy

Once the pots are established, your herbs won't need an awful lot of attention. Keep the soil moist, but not overly wet - most herbs prefer a slightly drier soil, particularly rosemary and sage. During the hot Australian summer, however, you can probably water them every day. Fertilise them during the growing season with a little seaweed-based liquid fertiliser. Regularly pick your herbs to keep plants healthy, and prune the tips from perennial varieties like mint, sage and thyme.

Which herbs to choose

We've selected eight herbs, known for their versatility and great flavour.



Basil
ANNUAL

Taste: minty, sweet, peppery

Which part to use: leaves, whole or shredded

Perfect with: tomatoes, potatoes, pasta, prawns



Chives
PERENNIAL

Taste: mild oniony flavour

Which part to use: all, finely snipped

Perfect with: butter, potatoes, sour cream, fish



Coriander
ANNUAL

Taste: savoury mint

Which part to use: leaves, whole or chopped, and stems, chopped

Perfect with: stir fries, curries, guacamole, salsa

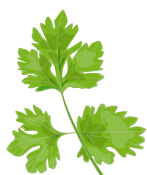


Mint
PERENNIAL

Taste: minty

Which part to use: leaves, whole or chopped

Perfect with: peas, potatoes, fruit, lamb



Parsley (flat-leaf)
ANNUAL

Taste: mild celery

Which part to use: leaves, whole or chopped

Perfect with: most meats, salads, sauces



Rosemary
PERENNIAL

Taste: pungent pine

Which part to use: sprigs, or leaves stripped from stem

Perfect with: lamb, beef, chicken, grilled vegetables



Sage
PERENNIAL

Taste: sweet pine

Which part to use: leaves, chopped

Perfect with: pork, stuffing, mushrooms, pasta



Thyme
PERENNIAL

Taste: earthy, woody

Which part to use: sprigs, or leaves stripped from stem

Perfect with: chicken, pork, potatoes

How to use your herbs

Here are some great recipe ideas that utilise your flavour-filled bounty:

- **Fully loaded nachos** (coriander)
- **Super green "sausage" rolls** (mint and basil)
- **Tomato & cucumber salad with spicy chickpeas** (mint and parsley)