



## **GROWING HERBS IN CONTAINERS**

### **PLANTING AND SPACING**

To be successful when growing herbs in a container, choose a pot that is at least six inches in diameter with an eight-inch soil depth, use only one plant per pot in this size. Larger containers can be used to make combination herb gardens. Let your imagination run wild when considering what type of container to grow herbs in. Just about anything will work, but keep in mind, most varieties prefer fast draining soil. As long as the container you select has adequate holes and drains well, your plants will thrive.

### **HARVESTING YOUR HERBS**

Regular pruning of herbs promotes fresh and vigorous growth. Use your herbs regularly to keep them pruned. Freeze or dry extra cuttings for out of season use. Harvest herbs in the morning when moisture and fragrance are at their peak. However, wait to harvest until after dew has dried. Although you can harvest cooking herbs all season, give perennials some time off in the fall to help them prepare for winter.

### **TEMPERATURE**

Your potted herbs will enjoy full sun. It is important to read the temperature requirements on the tag. Some herbs are perennial such as, Rosemary and Thyme, and tolerate much cooler temperatures than the annual herbs such as Basil and Cilantro. You don't have to stop growing herbs in the winter. Tender perennial herbs, like rosemary, need to come indoors to avoid a harsh winter. However, just as setting plants outdoors in the spring, you'll have more success at maintaining growth and bloom if you acclimatize your perennial herbs before making a permanent move to your kitchen.

The best time to bring herbs indoors from outside is before the first frost. It's also a good idea to make the transition a slow one. Start by bringing your plants inside for an hour or two each day, increasing the time each day for a week or two to help them to adjust to the changes in temperature and light. One way to protect your herbs from frost is to bring them indoors in the late afternoon and set them out again in the morning, setting them out later and/or bringing them in earlier, little by little, for about a week. Acclimating your plants in this way greatly increases your chance for successfully growing garden herbs indoors.

### **SOIL**

Most potted herbs thrive in any good potting mixture in a container that provides good drainage. It is important to use good soil; specific container mixes are available at your local Garden Center.

## **NUTRITION**

Pot-grown plants need occasional fertilization. Fertilize outdoor pots at least once mid-season with a good organic fertilizer. However, be cautious in fertilization since in most cases, less is more. Over fertilization of herbs results in weak growth and reduces the oils that give the herbs flavor.

## **PESTS**

Most herbs have few problems with pests and disease. Regular weeding, proper watering, and frequent use (pruning) usually eliminates any pests and diseases herbs may encounter.

## **WATER**

Water regularly! Water-holding gels (sold in crystal form and mixed in the soil) are especially good for container crops.