

Marjoram

Choose a sheltered site that gets full sun. Marjoram prefers soil on the rich side with a neutral to alkaline pH (7.0 to 8.0), but in warm weather it will thrive even in poor, dry soil.

Sow seeds directly into the ground after the last frost or, to hurry things along, start seeds indoors six weeks before the last expected frost.

Harden off seedlings, when all danger of frost has passed, move them to the garden, spacing them 6 inches apart.

Keep plants warm and on the dry side. Protect young plants with covers if the weather turns chilly.

Grow marjoram in containers if you live in a region colder than USDA zone 9. When the weather is mild, keep the plants on a sunny terrace or deck; when temperatures dip toward the frost level, move them to a cool but sunny greenhouse, cold frame or windowsill.

Start picking leaves as soon as they're large enough to use; flavour is best before the flowers open.

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