

Seasonal Living *with* Herbs

How to Grow,
Harvest, Preserve
and Use Herbs
Year Round

Jess
Buttermore



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“Even more important than what she gave her garden was what it gave her. In it, she found a sense of calm.”

—*Kristin Hannah,*
The Nightingale

Introduction

An Herbal Awakening

For me, the gardening cycle begins in the greenhouse. With each seed sown, new ideas are budding. New dreams for what the coming year’s garden will hold and how I might inspire others to grow alongside me. Beginning in January, I can be found in my greenhouse growing hundreds of herbs and flowers from seed, nurturing tiny seedlings into robust plants that can be planted out as soon as that final frost has passed. And for the six months following that, my garden is blooming with flowers and herbs. The more time I spend in it, the more I realize how important gardens have become to us over the past few years. Gardens are no longer simply a place to grow plants. They have taken on a more holistic purpose for many of us, playing a vital role in both our physical health and mental wellbeing. It was this realization that led me to begin documenting my gardening journey.

I learned very quickly that fellow gardeners and herbalists are extremely generous with their knowledge and insight, and it didn’t take long for me to realize that I wanted to pay that same courtesy forward by sharing my knowledge and experiences of gardening through my words, my land, and my lens. I turned my focus, and ultimately my business, toward sharing my journey in gardening, herbalism, and botanical design with others by writing about and photographing what I was learning. When the opportunity was presented to me to compile all my experiences, insight, recipes, tutorials, and photography into a book, I was ecstatic. As a professional photographer, photographing herbs and flowers that I’ve grown from seed is one of the ways I show gratitude for them and the memories they make for my family. Gratitude for the lands and the means to grow them. And for the beautiful space in which to enjoy them. Photography is my way of preserving them long beyond their vase or jar life. I came to realize

that this book was something I had been working toward for years without recognizing it. Each garden design, seed choice, photograph, and blog article were steppingstones toward the book you hold in your hands.

Is there any better way to feel connected to the earth than to grow and tend to a garden filled with herbs? You give it time, patience, energy, and attention, and in return, it gives you buckets full of medicinal and culinary herbs and a place to turn your thoughts. My garden breathes new purpose nearly every time I visit it. Being outdoors in my garden, surrounded by the botanicals I've nurtured from seed, not only balances my brain chemistry, but it also has a beautiful way of pulling me away from the confines and stresses of modern technology. It is my dwelling place for creativity. My sanctuary and refuge. The flowers and herbs I cultivate in my garden have a secret language all their own. It's just a matter of slowing down long enough to hear it.

As a garden grows, so does the gardener grow alongside it because the garden is very much a teacher. It has taught me patience, persistence, and mindfulness. A series of traumatic events unfolded in my life as a young adult, leading to the onset of panic attacks and severe anxiety. Gardening has helped lessen the symptoms associated with my anxiety and the burdens that weigh heavy on my heart. There are always more pressing things to do, but time in the garden provides the sustenance I need to do those other things well. Even today, as my garden feels less like a new adventure and more like an old friend, it continues to shape, steady, and inspire me. It whispers to my heart and encourages me to stop and enjoy the present. I no longer wish for the next mile of my journey but rather enjoy the path I'm on at this very moment. I truly believe I am a better wife, mother, daughter, friend and neighbor thanks to this space and the joy it has brought me.

One of the things I love most about herbs, is that no matter how my garden evolves over the years, there's always a place for them. Herbs have transformed my botanical story, flawlessly intermingling with my flowers as the perfect little companions in the most enchanting way. I

take great pride in designing my garden each year, tending to it, and preserving its bountiful harvests. I find even the simplest tasks, like snipping a few quick sprigs of this or that herb when I'm preparing a meal or craft cocktail, equally as gratifying. My hope is that the pages that follow will become a resource to you, inspiring you to grow a garden filled with herbs, and guiding you through that process. This book explores my personal experiences growing a holistic herb and flower garden and, alongside it, growing in my relationship with the earth. May the insight, guidance, and imagery filling these pages inspire you to begin (or continue on) your journey with herbs. To understand them. To grow them. To fall in love with them. And to incorporate them into your garden and daily life in meaningful ways. Consider this book your personal invitation to grow with me.

A Garden for the Mind, Body, and Soul

“The glory of gardening: hands in the dirt, head in the sun, heart with nature. To nurture a garden is to feed not just the body, but the soul.”

—*Alfred Austin*, English poet (1835–1913)


In much the same way that holistic medicine takes into account mental and social factors in addition to symptoms of an illness to treat the whole person, holistic gardening is an approach that benefits the mind, spirit, and body of the gardener. Gardening has many benefits that can improve your overall health and well-being. It's truly remarkable how working in the garden, with your hands in the soil, can alter the balance of neurotransmitters in your brain, relieving stress and anxiousness. If I hadn't experienced it firsthand, I'm not sure I'd believe it. In a garden of herbs, one can find a sanctuary of peace and a place of solace where worries ease. Let's dig into the multitude of benefits of gardening.

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“The true function of the herb is not only to heal the body, but to bring ease and joy to the mind and the soul.”

—*Alice Morse Earle*, *Old Time Gardens* (1851–1911)



A lush garden scene with various plants, a wooden table and chairs, and a trellis structure. The garden is filled with green foliage and colorful flowers, including orange and pink blooms. A wooden table and chairs are set up on a gravel path. In the background, there is a wooden trellis structure and a wooden fence. The scene is set in a wooded area with tall trees.

“How doth the little busy bee
Improve each shining hour,
And gather honey all the day
From every opening flower!”

—*Isaac Watts*, English poet and
Congregationalist minister (1674–1748)

Creating a Pollinator Haven

When you grow a pollinator-friendly garden with herbs, no matter how big or small, you create a vital ecosystem that supports a variety of plant and animal life. Pollinators like bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds are responsible for pollinating many of the fruits, vegetables, and flowers that we enjoy. Without them, our food supply and natural beauty would be greatly diminished. By planting herbs and other fragrant and colorful plants and flowers, and providing habitat for these important creatures, we make a positive impact on our world, and help ensure a healthy and thriving ecosystem for ourselves and future generations.

My garden is filled with colorful and fragrant flowers and herbs that attract and feed birds and other pollinators such as honeybees, native bees, moths, and butterflies. When I harvest, I make sure to always leave plenty behind to keep them busy and happy. It brings me so much joy to attract life and buzzing around me as I work in my garden. To hear the beautiful birdsong. To watch my neighbor’s honeybees make their daily rounds through my garden beds collecting nectar, or a pair of butterflies as they flutter by in their cyclone formation, oblivious to my gaze. We even have a resident hummingbird who has taken ownership over the garden space and his hanging feeder, quickly running off any other birds that attempt to visit. And then there are the chickadees—perhaps my favorite of all the peaceful sounds I hear while I’m tending to my garden beds, with their fluty birdsong that has the ability to lift my spirits no matter how drained I may feel. Thanks to so many herbs, my garden hums with life from dawn to dusk like never before, attracting family, friends, and pollinators alike, and inviting them in to stay a while.

How Do You Know if a Plant Is Pollinator Friendly?

A plant listed as pollinator friendly typically means it is rich in nectar and pollen for insects and that the shape and color of the flower encourages pollinators to visit. Pollinator-friendly plants often have

To Sow Seeds or Plant Starts

It's time, friend. Time to get our hands dirty. There's something so soothing about working with soil. The smell, the texture, the idea of caring for a plant that will provide health benefits for your entire family. Spring is for laying the foundation for a bountiful summer harvest. For sowing the seeds for a slower life. For taking time to appreciate the longer days and waking hours it offers. I've found that gardening improves my mood when I'm having a difficult day and gives me a feeling of peacefulness and contentment. My hope is that you, too, will experience similar mental health benefits when working in your herb garden. Let the soil sift through your fingers. Take the time to learn about what you're growing. Enjoy and appreciate each step of the process.

Benefits of Growing from Seed

“What made it her garden was the way she could look at a handful of tiny seeds in the bareness of winter and imagine how they could be, months later, sunlit and in flower. It was as if she painted with blooms.”

—*Geraldine Brooks, Year of Wonders*

Growing herbs from seed is a rewarding experience with many benefits. It is an opportunity to nourish yourself mentally and can be mood-lifting during those last weeks of winter in your journey to creating a diverse and thriving garden over purchasing starter plants. Here are just a few reasons why starting your herbs from seed is a great choice:

“The great charm of herbs lies in their ethereal essence, which is so difficult to describe, but which is felt by everyone who loves and appreciates them.”

—*Hilda Leyel* (a.k.a. C. F. Leyel),
Herbal Delights (1880–1957)



Selection

When you grow herbs from seed, you have access to a much wider variety of plant options. Nurseries and garden centers may have a limited selection of varieties, but when buying seeds, you can choose from dozens of different varieties within a single type of herb, each with their unique flavors, fragrances, and physical properties. Growing from seed opens an entirely new world of possibilities to your garden.

Cost

Growing herbs from seed is much more cost-effective than purchasing starter plants. While a packet of seeds may cost a few dollars, there are usually anywhere from 8-50 seeds in a single packet, whereas a single starter plant can cost several times more.

Quality Control

When you start your own herbs from seed, you have sole control over the quality of your plants. You control what is in the soil, what types of fertilizers are used, and you can select the healthiest,

strongest seedlings to transplant into your garden, which can result in stronger, more resilient plants that are better able to resist disease and pests.

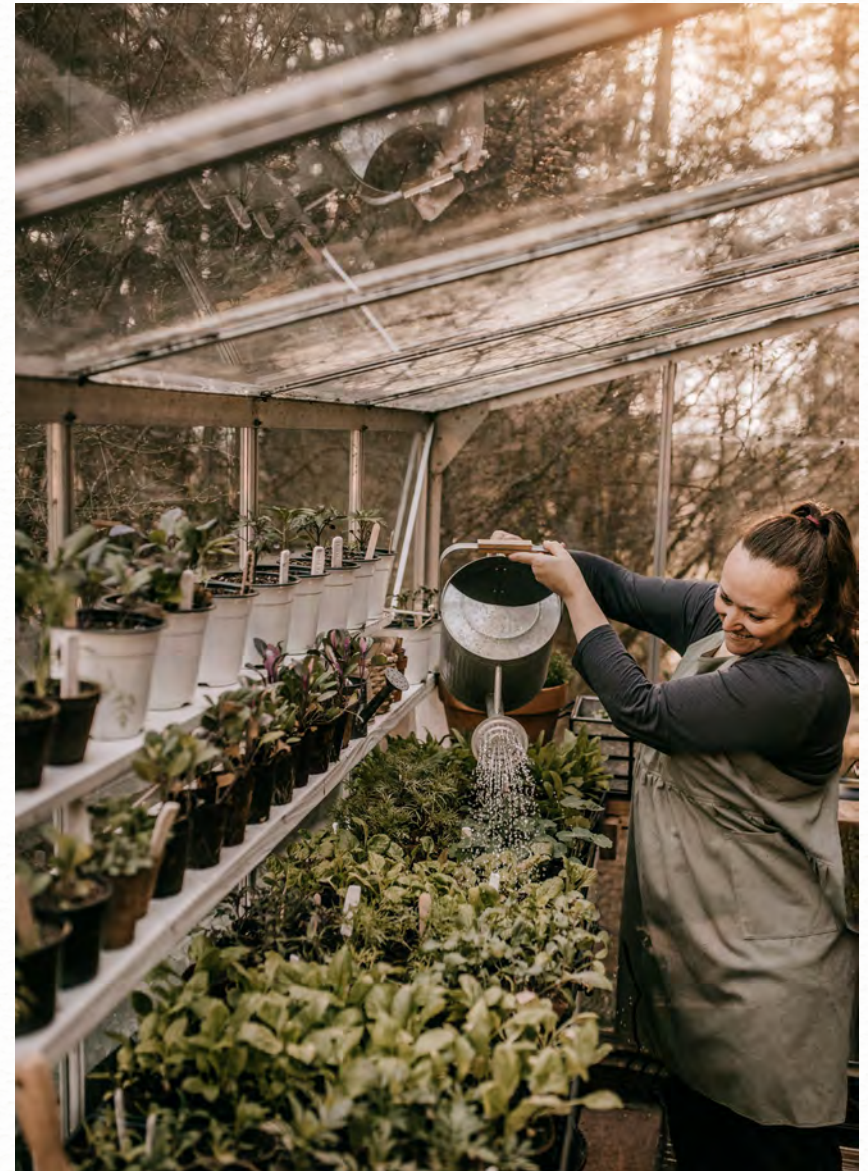
Robustness

Generally speaking, plants grown organically from seed produce a more robust root structure than those grown from cuttings or with the use of chemicals. Seed-grown plants are stronger, more resilient, have a better yield, and last longer.

Experience

Starting herbs from seed can be an educational and rewarding experience for gardeners of all ages. There's something deeply satisfying about growing your own plants from seed. Watching tiny seeds sprout into thriving plants is a fulfilling experience that can provide a sense of accomplishment and pride and every growing season brings with it opportunities to observe, learn, and problem solve. It's also a great way to teach children about the life cycle of plants and gain hands-on experience in caring for even the tiniest seedlings.

Benefits of Choosing Starter Plants



“He who plants a garden plants happiness.”

—Chinese Proverb

Drying



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Lay your herbs in a single layer on a mesh drying rack to dry, or bundle a few sprigs together with jute twine (tied tightly) and hang. I usually do a combination of both. Dry in a warm, dry, airy location with good circulation. I keep a dehumidifier running near the drying rack to help remove moisture from the air near where the herbs are drying and to keep the air continuously circulating. Alternatively, you can use a dehydrator to dry your herbs in a more expedited manner.

Make sure your herbs are completely dry before storing them in clean, airtight jars. If air-drying, I typically check them at about the two-week mark and go from there. They should have a brittle texture and crumble easily. Some will be ready to jar, while others will need more time. Spreading them out so they aren't touching speeds up the drying process a bit.

Strip leaves and flowers from the main stem and store them in their whole form, when possible, to preserve potency. Beneficial properties are released when they are broken or crushed, so crush with a mortar and pestle (or with your hands) right before using them.

Label your jars with the variety of herb you're storing and the date of harvest. Most herbs will maintain their flavor and potency for twelve to eighteen months. If you notice that your herbs lack luster (no longer smell potent or the color is fading), use them to make botanical fire starters (page XX) or simply compost them back into the earth. Store the jars in a cool, dry area away from direct sunlight.

My Favorite Herbs to Dry

- ◆ Basil
- ◆ Bay
- ◆ Bee balm
- ◆ Butterfly pea
- ◆ Calendula
- ◆ Chamomile
- ◆ Echinacea
- ◆ Eucalyptus
- ◆ Feverfew
- ◆ Lavender
- ◆ Lemon balm
- ◆ Marigold
- ◆ Mint
- ◆ Oregano
- ◆ Rose
- ◆ Rosemary
- ◆ Sage
- ◆ Thyme
- ◆ Yarrow

Freezing

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Freezing is often considered the best way to preserve herbs that have delicate flavors or textures, or that have tender leaves. Dill, chive, cilantro, and parsley are examples of herbs that preserve best when frozen, but all herbs can be preserved using this process. My favorite herb-freezing method uses an ice cube tray. Chop the herbs into small pieces and evenly distribute across the tray. Then pour water or organic extra virgin olive oil over the herbs. Carefully relocate to the freezer. Once the oil cubes are frozen, pop them out and store in a plastic bag in the freezer for up to a year to be used individually as needed. Herb and water cubes can be thawed and drained. Herb and oil cubes can be dropped straight onto your skillet. This freezing method can also be used to portion out and preserve homemade pesto!



Pictured: a versatile herb blend of rosemary, sage, and thyme in extra virgin olive oil



Pressing

While I understand that the process of pressing flowers can be expedited in a microwave or oven, I prefer the more traditional method of pressure and time. A few times a week, during the spring and summer months, I find myself harvesting specifically to press and preserve, most of the time without a specific purpose in mind. Pressed flowers take up nearly no space, will keep for decades, and are quite literally a method of preserving a botanical moment in time. Here are some of my favorite, tried-and-true botanical pressing tips.

Before harvesting, be sure you have allotted yourself enough time to press as well. Some plants will begin to wilt or brown shortly after harvesting, so you want to press the same day, preferably the same hour. Avoid harvesting herbs when they are wet with dew or rain, or right after watering. Late morning is ideal. Search for blooms that are unblemished, meaning they have not started to brown or shrivel on the edges and are free of tears and bug nibbles. I also recommend harvesting at different stages in the plant's growing process for variety and visual interest.

What You'll Need

fresh herbs (blooms and foliage)	blotting paper
pair of snips for trimming	tweezers
couch sheets ⁸	botanical press ⁹

How to Press

1. Source your botanicals. Dab flowers and stems dry before pressing to remove any extra moisture. Snip off any leaves or petals you don't want to include in the press.
2. Prep your press by stacking a bottom board (corrugated cardboard works great here), followed by a piece of couch paper and then a piece of blotting paper.
3. Place herbs face down as you stack, adjusting the petals and leaves as needed. It will help the petals to press into place in a more natural way. Curve your stems and leaves into interesting positions.
4. Cover your herbs with another piece of blotting paper, then another piece of couch paper.
5. Repeat this layering system for as many herbs as you have to press.
6. Carefully place your press cover on and secure it.
7. Pressing flowers takes time. Check in on your pressed botanicals every two weeks and decide what can be removed and what should stay another week. Use tweezers to carefully transfer pressed flowers from the press to your storage box.

Note: Extremely dense-centered flowers, such as roses, will need dismantling. This is the process of deconstructing the flower and pressing the petals separately, with the intention of reassembling the pressed petals afterward to reconstruct the bloom.

⁸ Couch sheets are made of soft, thick paper that is designed and treated to absorb water. They are placed between the layers of botanicals and are reusable. Blotting paper is placed between the couch sheets on both sides of the botanicals to absorb excess moisture and act as a barrier between the plants and the couch sheets. This ultra-thin tissue-like paper also makes it easier to remove the herbs without damaging petals or structure.

⁹ If you do not have a flower press, a heavy book will do. Alternatively, you can make a quick flower press with two flat pieces of wood and a large Velcro strap, stretchy fabric, clamps, or any mechanism that will tightly secure the layers of pages and botanicals between the two boards. Better yet, you can make your own using the tutorial in the following section!

My Favorite Herbs for Pressing

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| ♦ Bee balm | ♦ Fennel | ♦ Pansy |
| ♦ Borage | ♦ Feverfew | ♦ Rose (dismantled) |
| ♦ Butterfly pea | ♦ Lavender | ♦ Sage |
| ♦ Calendula | ♦ Lemon balm | ♦ Viola |
| ♦ Chamomile | ♦ Marigold (French) | ♦ Violet |
| ♦ Dill | ♦ Mint | ♦ Yarrow |
| ♦ Eucalyptus
(silver dollar) | ♦ Nasturtium | |

Store your pressed botanicals in a dry, cool, and dark place to preserve their color and shape, and in an airtight container to prevent them from being exposed to air and moisture. Avoid exposing your pressed botanicals to direct sunlight or high humidity, which can cause them to fade and discolor over time.



Bee Balm *Monarda* spp.

“...since plants are medicines,
so too could their stories be healing.”

—*Robin Wall Kimmerer, Braiding Sweetgrass*

A member of the Lamiaceae (mint) family, this incredibly fragrant and beautiful herb is one of my very favorite perennials to grow in my garden due to its medicinal properties, delectable minty-citrus aroma, and vibrant colors. There are many varieties of bee balm available, with thistle-like flowers in shades of pink, red, and purple. The name, bee balm, is derived from its attractiveness to bees and other pollinators, but it is sometimes also referred to as bergamot (a nod to the bergamot orange), wild bergamot, crimson bee balm, scarlet Monarda, sweet leaf, Oswego tea, lemon mint, wound healer, or horsemint. In some parts of the world, it can grow wild and be foraged through the summer months. I consider bee balm a staple in every cottage, cut flower, and apothecary garden.

Beneficial Properties and Common Uses

Bee balm has many beneficial attributes, including antibacterial, antifungal, and anti-nausea properties used to naturally support those with eczema, sore throats, cold sores, achy muscles, and congestion. As a diaphoretic, it is used to naturally aid in relieving fevers. Fresh leaves can also be chewed as a natural mouthwash.

In the garden, bee balm attracts beneficial pollinators including bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds. I love having it readily available in my own backyard garden in case I cut or scratch myself while working in my garden. I simply tear a small portion of the stem off and apply the liquid inside directly to my scratch for instant cooling relief. Bee balm is a good garden companion for tomatoes, even improving their health and flavor.

In the kitchen, bee balm is the perfect addition to summer iced teas, lemonades, and cocktails. It is a wonderful substitute for mint, both muddled into the drink and as garnish, and is often used in hot teas and infusions as well. Added to salads, it gives greens a bold savory and minty boost. I most enjoy infusing honey with bee balm.

Around the home, fresh stalks can also be added to herbal shower bundles and are lovely, fragrant, and thoughtful additions to flower arrangements as a way to gift a beautiful and useful herb to someone you care about.

Try bee balm in the following recipes and tutorials: [See pages \[XXX\]](#)

To Grow

To grow bee balm, start by selecting a location with full sun to partial shade and well-draining soil. Plant bee balm in the spring after the danger of frost has passed. I recommend planting two seeds in each hole, only about a quarter-inch deep. Then cover the top with a very light layer of soil. Be patient with bee balm, as it can take anywhere from ten to thirty days to germinate, but will be well worth the wait in the end. It is hardy in USDA zones 3–10.

Bee balm is a perennial and will grow up to three feet tall! Simply transplant it into your garden once the threat of frost has passed. When transplanting, keep in mind that the bee balm plant will grow larger each year. Because it self-seeds, bee balm can be considered a bit invasive, so a spacious garden bed or container is a good option. An organic fertilizer high in nitrogen and a big drink of water will help bee balm settle into its permanent living place in your garden, and pollinators will be forever grateful.

My favorite varieties of bee balm are Wild Bergamot, Scarlet Bee Balm, Monarda Beauty of Cobham, Monarda Balmy Lilac, and Monarda Balmy Pink.

Care and Harvest

Water the soil around the plants regularly, being careful not to overwater. Avoid getting the leaves or flowers wet. Deadhead spent blooms to encourage the growth of new flowers, and pinch back the stems to promote bushiness.

The best time of day to harvest bee balm is in the morning, after the dew has evaporated but before it gets too hot. This will ensure that you capture the greatest flavor and highest potency of medicinal properties. To harvest, cut the entire stalk when the small flowers have appeared (or even before). If you plan to use them fresh over the next few days, simply drop them into a vase of clean, cool water in your kitchen to enjoy their delicate beauty between uses.

Cut the entire plant back in the fall to prevent them from becoming too woody and to encourage new growth next year. Be sure to label the area to know where it will reemerge in the spring.

To Preserve

If you want to dry them, tie a few stalks together into a small bunch and hang upside down in a cool, dry, well-ventilated location for a few weeks. (I typically let mine hang for three weeks, and then check that the leaves crumble easily when pinched before breaking the flowers and leaves off the stems to jar.) Alternatively, you can use a dehydrator.

Herbal Spotlight

Bee balm leaves were used as a substitute for tea during the American Revolutionary War when black tea was scarce.

Eucalyptus *Eucalyptus spp.*

“All that man needs for health and healing has been provided by God in nature, the challenge of science is to find it.”

—*Paracelsus* (1493–1541)

A member of the Myrtaceae family, eucalyptus is actually a genus of tree and shrub but, due to its many medicinal attributes, it is often categorized as an herb and included in many herbal recipes. While there are over seven hundred species of eucalyptus, *Eucalyptus globulus* is most often used in herbalism. Eucalyptus is known for its strongly scented blue-green foliage which produces essential oil that is commonly used in aromatherapy. It is sometimes referred to as blue gum, southern blue gum, Tasmanian blue gum, Tasmanian oak, Victorian blue gum, gum tree, or fever tree.

Beneficial Properties and Common Uses

One of my favorite plants in my garden is eucalyptus, for its aromatic scent commonly thought to have a calming effect and often used in aromatherapy. It has many beneficial attributes as well, including anti-inflammatory, astringent, antimicrobial, and antiseptic properties used to naturally treat cuts and scratches and support those with sinus congestion, sore throats, sore joints and muscles, colds and flus, and respiratory ailments including asthma, bronchitis, and cough.

In the garden, eucalyptus acts as a pest repellent, as most insects do not like its scent.

Around the home, eucalyptus is a common ingredient in household cleaning products, air fresheners, and insect repellents, and is a beautiful and fragrant addition to floral arrangements and wreaths. It can also be added to fresh botanical shower bundles and steamers.



Silver bell caps can be used as a natural button and are gorgeous seasonal additions to floral arrangements, wreaths, and other crafting projects.

Precautionary Note: Fresh eucalyptus leaves are toxic if consumed, so never ingest them. Eucalyptus oil is also toxic when ingested.

Try eucalyptus in the following recipes and tutorials: [\[insert appropriate page numbers here\]](#)

To Grow

Eucalyptus thrives in cool, wet winters and dry, hot summers, and requires plenty of sunlight and well-drained soil. Start indoors ten to twelve weeks prior to your zone's last frost date. Sow seeds on the surface of moistened soil but do not cover, as eucalyptus needs light to germinate. Use a misting can or water bottle to sprinkle water very gently over top of the seeds from an arm's length above, so the mist falls onto the seeds without blowing them away. After sprouts appear, bottom-watering is sufficient. Germination takes an average of forty-five days. While it is very slow to germinate, once established, eucalyptus will quickly become one of the fastest-growing plants in your garden. (I start my eucalyptus from seed in January.) It will need to be pruned regularly to control its size and shape. Eucalyptus typically grows in USDA zones 8–11. For climates that dip below 50 degrees Fahrenheit during the cold months, I recommend growing eucalyptus in containers and overwintering them, bringing the containers inside when temperatures drop, and then returning them outside when it warms again in the spring.

Alternatively, they can be purchased as starter plants and planted out after your zone's last frost date.

My favorite varieties of eucalyptus are Silver Dollar, Baby Blue, and Round-Leaved Mallee.

Care and Harvest

The branches should be harvested when they are mature but prior to flowering, by clipping them with clean pruning shears. If using in floral arrangements, condition each stem by removing the leaves on the bottom two-thirds to ensure that no leaves are submerged in water. They have a two-week (often more) vase life.

To Preserve

Air-dry the leaves on a screen in a cool place, out of direct sunlight, or hang upside down in small bunches. Once fully dried, store leaves in an airtight glass container for up to one year. Eucalyptus can also be pressed and used in botanical arts and crafts.

Herbal Spotlight

Did you know that the roots of all species of eucalyptus release a toxic chemical that inhibits the growth of any plants sharing the same soil around it? It's true, so be careful where you plant them! I have given all my eucalyptus plants their own dedicated containers and recommend doing this so you can easily relocate them indoors if you experience harsh winters or unusual dips in temperature.

Spring

“It was one of those March days when the sun shines
hot and the wind blows cold;
when it is summer in the light,
and winter in the shade.”

—*Charles Dickens* (1812–1870)

A Spring Awakening

The spring equinox, with its nearly perfect balance of day and night, is a reminder that longer, warmer days are ahead, bountiful harvests will be gathered, and new life will sprout. As the snow melts and the earth awakens from its winter sleep, an enchanting tapestry of fragrant herbs emerges. In this section, I've gathered my favorite recipes and tutorials made with those very first herbs to sprout during the waking days of spring, or with herbal oils that have spent the winter infusing in your pantry.

In the Kitchen

Chive Vinegars [xx](#)
Chive Blossom
Compound Butter [xx](#)
Culinary Decorating with Herbs [xx](#)
Botanical Sugars [xx](#)

Seasonal Sips

Herbal Refreshers [xx](#)
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The Art of Self-Care

Spearmint Eucalyptus Goat Milk
Bath Soak [xx](#)
Lavender Peppermint
Headache Oil [xx](#)

Garden-Made for the Home

Cedar House
Woodenware Butter [xx](#)
Tranquil Gardener's Wreath [xx](#)

In the Kitchen

Chive Vinegars

One of the most kitchen-friendly herbs, chives are always among the first spikes of green to peek through the soil in my garden. It's such a treat to see them because it means longer, warmer days are just around the bend. With these recipes, you can choose if you'd like a bold or delicate base flavor of vinegar.

Bold Chive Vinegar Ingredients

1 cup (227 g) chives, chopped	¼ cup (57 g) garlic, minced
2 cups (470 ml) white vinegar	¼ cup (57 g) shallots, chopped
¼ cup (57 g) lemon balm leaves, torn or chopped	

Delicate Chive Blossom Vinegar Ingredients

2 cups (455 g) chive blossoms, whole	2 cups (470 ml) white vinegar
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To Create

1. Combine all ingredients in a clean, dry glass canning jar. Cut two small sheets of parchment paper and stack them on the mouth of the jar to prevent the vinegar from eroding the metal and then top with the lid, and twist to secure.
2. Give the jar a good shake and store at room temperature for two weeks, shaking daily.
3. Strain with a fine mesh strainer, coffee filter, or two layers of natural muslin cloth into a clean jar for storage.

Note: Have extra chives or chive blossoms left over? Add them to your cream cheese before whipping, or make chive blossom compound butter (recipe on [page XX](#)) or a finishing salt (recipe on [page XX](#)).





Garden Goddess Cocktail

Subtle floral notes from the Crème de Violette complement the herbal earthiness from the freshly muddled herbs and simple syrup in this handcrafted botanical cocktail. And now that your garden is stocked with fresh herbs, you can easily manipulate the notes in this drink to fit your personal taste.

Ingredients

2 ounces (60 ml) pineapple-infused vodka	6 dashes bitters
½ ounce (15 ml) Crème de Violette	1–2 ounces (30–60 ml) cold water
½ ounce (15 ml) Earth Song simple syrup	1 sprig rosemary
1 ounce (30 ml) lime juice, freshly squeezed	3 sage leaves (common or Scarlett tangerine)
	1 sprig thyme and 1 sage leaf for garnish

Note: The variety of sage you choose to muddle will alter the drink's herbal notes. I prefer to use common broadleaf sage to add earthiness, which balances the sweetness from the pineapple-infused vodka. Using Scarlett tangerine sage will add distinct floral notes. I've found that the flavors of fruit-themed varieties of sage, such as pineapple or honeymelon, get lost in the pineapple-infused vodka, but are a great option if you are forgoing the fruit-infused spirit step.

To Create

1. Make the Earth Song simple syrup according to the recipe on [page XX](#).
2. Make pineapple-infused vodka by filling a large glass mason jar with cubes of fresh or canned pineapple. Pour vodka over the pineapple until it is completely submerged, approximately 8 oz (240 ml) of vodka for every ½ cup of fresh pineapple. Give it a good shake and store in a cool, dark place for five days, shaking occasionally. Strain the fruit from the vodka.
3. Combine first seven ingredients in a shaker with a half-cup of ice and shake vigorously for fifteen seconds.
4. Strain into a coupe glass.
5. Garnish with a thyme sprig and sage leaf.

Note: To make this cocktail a mocktail, substitute the vodka with one ounce of pineapple juice and one ounce of water.



Garden-Made for the Home

Botanical Broomsticks

I ran across these cinnamon-scented broomsticks at my favorite market and instinctively popped a few in my cart. When I got home, I couldn't wait to try my hand at decorating them with dried botanicals I'd preserved from my garden. Dried eucalyptus, sage, cedar, strawflower, and a blend of bunny tails and other grasses are great options for an autumn-inspired broom. Add holly or mistletoe sprigs for a more festive broom to use and display during the winter months. Lean one on your living room hearth and use to keep the area around the fireplace tidy, one in your greenhouse to brush off your workbench, and one in the chicken coop to deodorize. At the end of the season, stow it away with your seasonal décor for next year or use it as kindling for your final fire of winter.

Ingredients

dried herbs and other botanicals of choice

twig broom(s), thirty-inch tall or miniature six-inch handheld broom(s)

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To Create

1. Tie the dried herbs and botanicals onto the head of the broom with a bit of twine, beginning with the longest herbs, wrapping the twine around twice, and then continuing to stack each shorter layer of herbs on top so each previous layer is visible.
2. Double-knot it in the back and leave a few inches on the ends of the twine. Tie the ends together to create a loop for hanging.