HERB PLANT TRIO I: PLANTING AND GROWING GUIDE

AS SOON AS PLANTS ARRIVE:

Your plants have spent 3-4 days in transit without light or water and may have yellow leaves or show evidence of wilting. We have found that 99% of these plants will survive and thrive as long as you follow the simple care instructions listed here.

Take your plants carefully out of the shipping box as soon as possible, taking care not to damage stems or leaves. If the soil is dry, water gently but thoroughly. Place the pots in bright but indirect light indoors. Expose them to outdoor conditions gradually so they have the chance to acclimate to increasing amounts of sunlight before being planted outside for the season. Place them outside in the shade, sheltered from the wind, if temperatures have reached 50-55°F both day and night.

Remember: Even if your plants arrive on a glorious warm spring day, they will need to get used to being outdoors before being planted.

PLANTING IN THE GARDEN: Plant your baby plants into the garden outdoors only when weather is settled and warmed up to 50-55°F both night and day; colder temperatures and winds will harm them.

When you are ready to plant, choose a sunny location (at least 6 hours full sun) with good soil and excellent drainage. If the weather is hot, transplant your plants in the cool of the morning or late in the afternoon to minimize stress. Dig a hole large enough to generously accommodate the plant’s root ball.

To remove the plant from its nursery pot, flip the pot over, tap the bottom and slip the plant out. Don’t pull the plant out by its stem. If the roots are matted or tangled inside the pot, tease it out slowly and gently separate the roots from one another. Set the plant into its hole so that the top of the root ball is level with the surface of the surrounding soil. Then push soil back into the hole around the plant. Press firmly with your hands to eliminate air pockets and establish good soil contact. A gentle but thorough watering will further settle the soil and get things off to a good start.

GROWING IN CONTAINERS:

French Tarragon grows 8 to 12 inches tall and spreads out, so choose a pot about 12 inches wide and 10 inches deep. Pineapple Sage and Lemon Verbena will grow about 2-3 tall feet in pots, so choose large containers about 16 inches in diameter and 16 inches tall.

Fill pots with fresh, top quality potting mix, water the mix thoroughly and use your hands to mix in the moisture so the potting soil is evenly moistened throughout.

Remember plants in containers are totally dependent on you; they will need about one inch of water per week and fertilizing about every to 6-8 weeks with a good all-purpose plant fertilizer.

GROWING & USING YOUR HERBS

True French Tarragon (Artemisia dracunculus) Cold Hardy Perennial

Tarragon grows best in full sun, but will tolerate some light afternoon shade in very hot summer areas. It likes a deep, rich, well-drained soil. In its first season, your Tarragon plant will grow slowly because it is establishing its root system, so harvest very lightly. In the 2nd season and beyond, you will be able to harvest regular ample amounts in summer.

Tarragon plants can lose vigor after several years, at which time they should be dug up in early spring and replanted using some of the best roots. Aphids are about the only serious pest and can easily be controlled with non-toxic insecticidal soap solution or a strong water spray.

Use: Tarragon is prized for its unique, complex flavor, which combines elements of anise, mint and fennel. Chicken, fish and eggs are all natural pairings with tarragon. Its flavor is wonderful with fresh green beans, sautéed mushrooms, cooked spinach and onions, in cheese dishes and in potato salads and other potato dishes. Tarragon flavors Béarnaise and other classic creamy sauces.

With fresh tarragon in hand, you can easily make your own tarragon vinegar by storing fresh branches in any good wine vinegar. A cooking joy to have in ample amounts fresh from the garden.
In mild winter climates: Tarragon plants will die back during the cold weather, then in late spring new stems of lease emerge and grow steadily.

In cold weather climates: Where the ground freezes hard and there is usually snow cover, plants will die back completely at first frost and go dormant. Provide winter protection by mulching plants with several inches of straw, wood chips, compost, and dried autumn leaves.

Pineapple Sage (Salvia elegans)
Tender Perennial
This delightful fruit-scented sage has pretty heart-shaped leaves. Expect your plants to begin blooming strongly in midsummer, with deliciously scented, crimson-red tubular flowers. Depending on your climate, plants will grow as 3-5 foot tall flowering shrubs. If you are growing Pineapple Sage in a container, plants should reach 2½ to 3 feet tall.

Use: Pineapple Sage’s sweet, edible blossoms have a distinctly delicious Hawaiian pineapple aroma and flavor. They make a wonderful iced tea, or colorful and exotic accents for cocktails. Add them to fruit salads, cream cheese spreads, or use them to make delectable sorbet. Pineapple Sage is a wonderful addition to the garden.

In mild winter areas: Where the ground does not freeze hard, Pineapple Sage plants will die back in cold weather. In late spring, prune back older, damaged stems and new stems of leaves will emerge and grow steadily. Feed annually once well established.

In cold winter areas: Grow tender perennial Pineapple Sage as an annual or plant in a large pot to be brought indoors in advance of your first frost date and pruned back by 1/3 to overwinter indoors.

Lemon Verbena (Aloysia triphylla)
Tender Perennial
The 3 inch narrow leaves of Lemon Verbena grow in lance-like whorls tipped with tiny pale lavender flowers. Lemon Verbena has the sweetest lemon scent that you can imagine! Just brush the leaves to release their heavenly scent. Depending on climate, plants grow 3-5 feet tall; if grown in a container plants reach about 3 feet tall.

Use: You will love the scent and flavor of Lemon Verbena fresh or air-dried lemon verbena leaves keep their sweet, delicate and delicious citrus fragrance almost indefinitely.

Use: You will love the scent and flavor of Lemon Verbena fresh or simply air dried to use liberally in making the elixir of enticingly lemon-scented herbal tea to serve either hot or iced. Put a few leaves in your sugar canister to transfer their delicate aroma and use the sugar in cookies, muffins and cakes. Tuck a few fresh leaves into fresh fruit salads. (Especially lovely with honeydew melon!) Use lemon verbena leaves in making your own herbal potpourri.

In mild winter areas: Where the ground does not freeze hard, Lemon Verbena plants usually go dormant and die back in winter weather. In warm spring weather, prune off dead and damaged branches and plants will grow abundantly. Feed annually once well established.

In cold winter areas: Grow this tender perennial as an annual, or plant in a large pot to be brought indoors in advance of your first frost date and pruned back by 1/3 to overwinter indoors.