

Better Homes & Gardens.

growing and using

HERBS

42

HEALTHY WAYS
TO USE HERBS
EVERY DAY

*harvest
and
preserve*

COOKING
& CRAFTING

SKINCARE

TEAS &
DRINKS

BUTTERS
& BALMS

*grow
indoors!*

SUCCESSFUL
WINDOWSILL
GARDENS
P. 46

BACK BY
POPULAR
DEMAND:

SECOND PRINTING OF
GROWING AND USING
HERBS 2020

DISPLAY UNTIL 7/2/21

\$12.99US \$15.99CAN



SPC SPECIALS

LIVING THE ~~THE~~ herbal life



RENEE SHEPHERD

THIS DEDICATED GARDENER SEARCHES
THE WORLD TO BRING FRESH POSSIBILITIES
TO AMERICAN GARDENS AND KITCHENS.

PHOTOGRAPHER: BOB STEFKO

Growing Herbs Indoors

LIGHT

Give herbs a home indoors in the sunniest, south-facing window, with room for air circulation to keep them growing well. Clear, tempered-glass shelves and sturdy brackets can handle the job. Indoors, herbs need 12 to 14 hours of bright light daily. If the available light in your home is inadequate, set up an LED grow-light with an inexpensive timer to sustain plants.

HUMIDITY

A window above a sink offers the humidity necessary for plant health, especially during winter when the air in a heated home becomes dry. Alternatively, place pots on a pebble-filled waterproof tray and allow pots to drain into the tray when you water the plants.

PLANTS

The culinary herbs favored for their fresh flavors make delightfully fragrant houseplants. Basil, cilantro, oregano, parsley, and rosemary all grow with ease.



SNIP TIP

One of the best ways to help herbs grow well is to pinch the stem tips often. Herb standards (tree-form topiaries) show how regular pinching keeps plants lush and trim. They must be trimmed to maintain their shapes, plus the leaves are useful in cooking.

GIVE INDOOR PLANTS
A QUARTER CLOCKWISE TURN WEEKLY
TO EXPOSE ALL SIDES
EQUALLY TO SUNLIGHT
AND ENCOURAGE EVEN,
LUSH GROWTH.



CAN DO

Display kitchen herbs in brightly labeled tomato cans, available from an Italian grocery. Use large cans as cachepots or poke drainage holes in the bottoms and plant in them directly.



THIS PHOTO: For maximum flavor and fragrance, gather leaves or flowers on a dry morning just after the dew has dried but before the sun's heat has begun to dissipate the plants' essential oils. Generally, cut between one-third and two-thirds of a stem's length. Exception: When lavender and chives bloom, harvest the flowering stems at ground level. OPPOSITE: To air-dry herbs, gather six to 12 stems, depending on their thickness, and tightly secure them with a rubber band. The band will hold the stems as they dry and shrink. A partially open paper clip makes an ideal hook for hanging the bundles.



OPPOSITE: Renee Shepherd offers seeds of specialty herbs and vegetables to home gardeners and to growers for use in gourmet restaurants. **RIGHT:** The fragrant leaves of this heirloom variety, 'Mrs. Burns' lemon basil (*Ocimum basilicum citriodora*), marry refreshing lemon with heady basil flavors. **ABOVE:** Growing herb plants from seeds allows you to try a wider variety of plants than you'll typically find as seedlings at the garden center.

h

airloom, ethnic, and new seed varieties are the calling cards of Renee Shepherd. As the founder and owner of Renee's Garden, this intrepid gardener has worked for decades to find vegetable and herb seeds from around the world, trial those seeds, and bring them to American gardeners through her California-based seed company.

"Herbs are where gardening and cooking meet," Renee says. "Having lots of homegrown herbs makes a big difference in everyday cooking. We eat better when healthy foods taste better." *The Renee's Garden Cookbook* is filled with her advice and recipes.

Herbs also cater to people who have little space to garden. "I'm always on the hunt for dwarf varieties that grow well in containers," Renee says. Given well-draining soil, the plants flourish with little doting except for regular watering.

Renee has three criteria for the seeds she makes available at reneesgarden.com: "They must be beautiful, flavorful, and easy to grow," she says.

Sow Seeds in Pots

"Homegrown herbs are so easy in containers," Renee Shepherd says. "Most people have a sunny spot for a pot on their deck or patio. The closer herbs are to the kitchen, the more you'll use them." These pots of spring herbs feature snippable, easy-growing annuals: dill, cilantro, and chervil.



1 SOW

In a container filled with potting mix, sow herb seeds. Cover soil with burlap cut to fit in the pot. Water thoroughly.



2 SPROUT

The seeds of chervil, dill, and cilantro sprout quickly in warm weather and bright sunshine. Keep the burlap and soil damp, not wet, until seeds sprout.



3 CLIP

Harvest leaves as soon as they are big enough. Snip the plants regularly to keep them producing new leaves.





'Italian Cameo' (green) and 'Red Rubin' (purple) basil fill a pot with color and flavor. Both of these varieties offer full-size leaves on compact plants.

THAI BASIL

With a distinctive clove-mint flavor, 'Queenette' basil is ideal in Asian recipes. Purple stems and blooms add ornamental value to this choice.



FRENCH CHIVES

The grasslike blades of 'Fine Leaf' stay tender even after plants begin to bloom. Both stems and flowers taste like onions.



DANISH DILL

Dukat dill is from Denmark. Harvest the sweet leaves before plants bloom for best flavor. Let some plants flower and use the seeds for pickling.



FRENCH LAVENDER

Compact 'French Perfume' blooms the first year from seed. Snip stems just as blooms open. Use the dried flowers in potpourri.



ITALIAN OREGANO

'Heirloom Italian' bears small leaves that are milder and sweeter than other oregano varieties. Use the leaves fresh or dried in sauces.



FLAT-LEAF PARSLEY

Italian 'Gigante' is an heirloom parsley with large, glossy leaves that are subtly sweet. "I use handfuls of it in salads," Renee says.

