

Split Mountain Garden Center

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Growing Herbs for Cooking & Fragrance

Herbs are a wonderful addition to any garden, adding fragrance, color and texture to the landscape. They may also be grown indoors as house plants or in mixed containers on a patio. They are generally quite hardy and prefer ample sunlight to grow well. They prefer well-drained soil and require little fertilization. Many are somewhat drought-tolerant, and do well in our high desert climate.

There are many thousands of plants known as herbs that have been used by people for healing and other purposes over the centuries. We carry many of those plants in our perennials, shrubs and rose departments, but this list is limited to the varieties commonly used for cooking and for fragrance. Please do extensive research before using any herbs for medicinal purposes.

Many different types of plants are used as herbs. Annuals complete their life cycle in one year, while perennials may live for many years. Tender perennials, while long lived in warm regions, should be brought indoors for winter in colder climates. Biennials (such as parsley) generally produce leaves in their first year, then bloom the following spring, set seed for the next crop, then die. Knowing a bit about how they grow will increase your enjoyment as well as your harvest!

Aloe (<i>Aloe vera</i>) - classic ornamental and medicinal succulent, great houseplant	Tender Perennial
Basil (<i>Ocimum basilicum</i>) - loves warm weather and lots of sun; great companion plant for tomatoes	Annual
Cinnamon - spicy scent, narrow green leaves	
Genovese - Italian variety with dark green leaves, best for fresh salads, pesto	
Lemon Basil (Sweet Dani) - improved variety with fragrant lemon scent	
Lettuce Leaf - huge, 4-inch light green leaves, for salads and pasta	
Purple Ruffles - large fringed purple leaves, edible and ornamental	
Red Rubin - purple-bronze foliage, fine flavor and aroma	
Spicy Globe (Green Goddess) - compact variety with tiny green leaves	
Thai Basil (Siam Queen) - favorite used in Thai cooking, very ornamental	
Bay Laurel (<i>Laurus nobilis</i>) - bay leaf used in cooking; frost sensitive small tree	Tender Shrub
Bee Balm (Monarda) (<i>Mondarda didyma</i>) - scented leaves and colorful flowers for salads and teas	Perennial
Borage (<i>Borago officinalis</i>) - blue, star-shaped flowers, cucumber flavor, companion to strawberries	Annual
Burnet, Salad (<i>Poterium sanguisorba</i>) - tasty leaves have cucumber flavor, great in salads	Perennial
Calendula, Pot Marigold (<i>Calendula officinalis</i>) - self seeding annual, use for showy blooms and soothing salves	Annual
Catmint (<i>Nepeta mussini</i>) - fragrant scent with soft gray leaves, lavender blue flowers, great in borders	Perennial
Catnip, Lemon Catnip (<i>Nepeta cataria</i>) - fresh or dried, most cats love it, perennial	Perennial
Chamomile, German (<i>Matricaria recutita</i>) - sweetly scented, widely used for tea; reseeding annual	Annual
Chamomile, Roman (<i>Anthemis nobilis</i>) - fragrant groundcover with small white daisy-like blooms	Perennial
Chives (<i>Allium schoenoprasum</i>) - mild onion taste, used for salads & baked potatoes, purple blooms in spring	Perennial
Garlic Chives (<i>Allium tuberosum</i>) - mild, garlic flavored leaves, large white flowers	Perennial
Cilantro (Coriander) (<i>Coriandrum sativum</i>); leaves used in Mexican cooking, grows best in cool weather	Annual
'Delfino' - finely cut leaves with mild flavor, slower to bolt in hot weather	
Comfrey (<i>Symphytum officinale</i>) - widely used for healing compresses, do <i>not</i> use internally	Perennial
Curry plant (<i>Helichrysum italicum</i>) - attractive ornamental with curry-scented silver foliage	Tender Perennial
Dill (<i>Anethem graveolens</i>) - vigorous, re-seeding annual used for flavoring pickles, leaves used in soups, sour cream	Annual
Dill, Fernleaf - compact variety reaches 18" in height, best for containers. Use leaves or seeds in flavoring	Annual
Ephedra (Mormon Tea) (<i>Ephedra viridis</i>) - historically used for tea, remedy for colds, hardy native shrub	Perennial
Feverfew (<i>Tanacetum parthenium</i>) - white, double flowers bloom profusely; re-seeds	Perennial
Geraniums, Scented (<i>Pelargonium sp.</i>) - nostalgic scented plants with a tantalizing array of fragrances	Tender Perennials
Great as house plants or in combination planters. Varieties include:	
'Apple', 'Chocolate Mint', 'Citronella', 'Citrosa' (Mosquito Fighter),	
'Fernleaf' (pine scented), 'Gray Lady Plymouth' (rose scented),	
'Joy Lucille' (peppermint), 'Lime', 'Old Fashioned Rose', 'Prince of Orange',	
'Skeleton-Rose', 'Staghorn Oak', 'Variegated Lemon'	
Germander (<i>Teucrium sp.</i>) - perennials used for edging, knot gardens; several ornamental varieties	Perennial
Gotu Kola (<i>Centella asiatica</i>) - tropical plant used for centuries in India for many purposes; avoid direct sun	Tender Perennial

Split Mountain Garden Center Herbs (continued)

Lavender (<i>Lavandula species</i>) - shrubby perennials used in fragrance, soaps; some varieties hardy	
English, 'Munstead' (<i>L. angustifolia</i>); lavender-blue flowers, 18" mounds, hardiest variety	Perennial
'Goodwin Creek' (<i>L. dentata</i>) - attractive silver-gray foliage, blue flowers, best in containers (Zone 6)	Tender Perennial
Lemon Balm (<i>Melissa officinalis</i>) - strong lemon scent; use for flavoring, teas; mounding, hardy perennial	Perennial
Lemon Grass (<i>Cymbopogon</i>) - tangy enlarged leaf bases used in Thai dishes, grow in large pot	Tender Perennial
Lemon Verbena (<i>Aloysia triphylla</i>) - fragrant lemon leaves use in aromatherapy, great in beverages	Tender Shrub
Marjoram, Sweet (<i>Origanum majorana</i>) - light, sweet, oregano-type flavor, fresh or dried	Tender Perennial
Mint (<i>Mentha sp.</i>) - vigorous and hardy—best confined to pots or areas where it may spread freely	Perennial
Apple Mint (<i>M. suaveolens</i>) - rounded, soft, light green leaves, apple fragrance	
Chocolate Mint (<i>M. species</i>) - peppermint type with dark green, low growing, chocolate mint fragrance	
Peppermint (<i>M. piperata</i>) - classic variety used for beverages, flavoring and garnishes	
Pineapple Mint (Variegated) (<i>M. suaveolens variegata</i>) - green & white leaves with delightful, pineapple fragrance	
Spearmint (<i>M. spicata</i>) - mild, sweet taste, bright green leaves	
Onion, Egyptian Walking (<i>Allium x proliferum</i>) - unusual, mild tasting top-setting onion	Perennial
Oregano (<i>Origanum</i>):	Perennial
Greek (<i>O. heracleoticum</i>) - rich flavor used in cooking, classic Italian seasoning	
Golden (<i>Origanum v. aureum</i>) - groundcover, yellow-green leaves	
'Hopley's Purple' - fragrant groundcover variety with dark green leaves and showy purple blooms	
'Wood's Compact' - low-growing, dense groundcover with pink blooms, fragrant	
Oregano, Cuban (Vick's Plant) (<i>Plectranthus</i>) - Ornamental and aromatic; excellent house plant	Tender Perennial
Parsley, Italian (Plainleaf) (<i>Petroselinum crispum</i>) - broad-leaf type with excellent flavor, best in seasoning	Biennial
Parsley, Moss Curled (<i>Petroselinum crispum</i>) - attractive, garnish-type with mild flavor	Biennial
Pennyroyal (<i>Mentha pulegium</i>) - creeping member of the mint family; insect repellent properties	Tender Perennial
Rosemary (<i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i>) - strongly fragrant shrub with a wide variety of uses	Tender Perennial
Upright and trailing varieties are best used in containers, though sometimes survives winters in Zone 5	
Rue (<i>Ruta graveolens</i>); tiny, silvery-green leaves, ornamental; used in cheese-making	Perennial
Sage (<i>Salvia sp.</i>):	
Garden Sage (<i>S. officinalis</i>) - standard variety used for cooking, hardy perennial	
'Berggarten' - choice strain with larger gray-blue leaves, robust low habit	
Golden Sage (<i>S. officinalis 'Icterina'</i>) - gold & green variegated leaves, protect in winter	
Tricolor Sage (<i>S. officinalis 'Tricolor'</i>) - pink, white and green leaves, protect in winter	
Pineapple Sage (<i>S. rutilans</i>) - fragrant, use for tea, red flowers in fall, bring indoors in winter	Tender Perennial
Santolina, Green (<i>Santolina virens</i>) - fragrant, finely cut green leaves, protect in winter	Perennial
Santolina, Grey (Lavender Cotton) (<i>S. chamaecyparissus</i>) - gray foliage, fragrant edging plant; moth repellent	Perennial
Savory, Summer (<i>Satureja hortensis</i>) - preferred variety with delicate flavor; good in vegetable dishes and stews	Annual
Savory, Winter (<i>Satureja montana</i>) - compact shrub with glossy green leaves, pungent aroma	Perennial
Sorrel, French (<i>Rumex scutatus</i>) - more refined than garden sorrel with lemony leaves used for salads & soups	Perennial
Southernwood (<i>Artemisia abrotanum</i>) - fragrant gray-green foliage, excellent insect repellent	Perennial
Sweet Leaf, Stevia (<i>Stevia rebaudiana</i>) - remarkably sweet herbal sugar substitute	Tender Perennial
Sweet Woodruff (<i>Galium odoratum</i>); fragrant leaves when dried, excellent groundcover for shade	Perennial
Tansy (<i>Tanacetum vulgare</i>); insect repellent, aromatic yellow-flowered	Perennial
Tarragon, French (<i>Artemisia dracuncululus</i>) - true French herb with fine flavor, forms a large, bushy plant	Perennial
Thyme, Upright (<i>Thymus vulgaris</i>):	Perennial
Caraway Thyme (<i>T. herba-barona</i>) - outstanding garden variety with wonderful fragrance	
English or French Thyme (<i>T. vulgaris</i>) - most popular variety, used in cooking	
Silver Thyme (<i>T. vulgaris 'Argenteus'</i>) - silver and green leaves, aromatic and attractive; less hardy than species	
Lemon Thyme (<i>T. vulgaris 'Upright Gold'</i>); strong lemon scent, gold & green, great in pots	
Thyme, Creeping (<i>Thymus species</i>) - used as groundcover, great between stepping stones	Perennial
'Doone Valley' (<i>T. serpyllum 'Doone Valley'</i>) - bright green leaves with lavender blooms, lemony fragrance	
Mother of Thyme, Wild Thyme (<i>T. serpyllum</i>) - green leaves, lavender flowers	
Red Creeping Thyme (<i>T. coccineus</i>) - rose red flowers above tiny green leaves	
Woolly Thyme (<i>T. pseudolanuginosus</i>) - fragrant mat of fuzzy gray-green leaves, tiny pink blooms	
Wormwood (various <i>Artemisia species</i>) - many historic medicinal and insect repellent uses; fragrant silver foliage	Perennial
Varieties include Silver King, Silver Mound, 'Valerie Finnis', Beach Wormwood	
Yarrow (<i>Achillea millefolium</i>) - many types with various flower colors; medicinal and insect repellent uses	Perennial

