



Aylett Nurseries
The Complete Garden Centre

Herbs

Information Leaflet No. 16



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Herbs have been cultivated and harvested by man for thousands of years. Throughout history herbs have been useful in most areas of daily living, as natural medication, in magic, in pharmaceuticals, as household remedies, as aromatics and flavourings, as cosmetics and for personal hygiene.

BRIEF HISTORY AND MODERN USAGE

Many of the herbs popular today have their origins in the Mediterranean regions and were introduced by the Romans. The combined knowledge of these plants and those already known in the North formed the basis of herbalism, an important aspect of early and mediaeval living. Monasteries were the main centres of learning and the monks in their Herbariums and Physic Gardens did much to increase the knowledge of plant derived remedies. During the 18th Century the first plant drugs began to be synthesised chemically giving rise to our present-day pharmaceutical industry.

By the 1500s most people were growing herbs for medicinal, culinary, and personal hygiene use. The growing of herbs in large houses gave rise to knot gardens or parterres. These were small decorative beds of herbs surrounded by low clipped hedges. Apart from medicinal, the main use of herbs at this time was to disguise the taste and smell of rotting meat, and for strewing around the house to guard against infestation and to mask smells. This practice also gave rise to the use of the various scents in toiletries and pot-pourri.

HERBS FOR POTS AND TROUGHS

Culinary herbs have long been grown in pots on windowsills and more commonly grown ones will do well. Many are aromatic and some have attractive flowers, so they need not be purely utilitarian.

They will need to be watered regularly but avoid over watering. Most herbs need a sunny site to thrive, and some herbs are annuals, which will need sowing each year, e.g., Basil, Borage and Summer Savoury. Parsley is a biennial and will need replacing every two years.

Herbs can be planted in tubs with other ornamental shrubs but on the whole, it is best to keep them on their own, using a soil-based compost ensuring adequate drainage. Invasive herbs such as Mint must be grown separately. The remainder can be grouped very pleasingly in large containers.

HERBS SUITABLE FOR CONTAINERS

ANGELICA - Biennial / perennial. Uses: medicinal and culinary.

BASIL - Half hardy annual. Uses: medicinal and culinary.

BAY - Evergreen shrub. Uses: medicinal, culinary and pot-pourri.

BORAGE - Annual. Uses: medicinal and culinary.

CARAWAY - Hardy biennial. Uses: medicinal, brewing and pot-pourri.

CHERVIL - Biennial. Uses: Cosmetic and culinary.

CHIVES - Perennial. Uses: medicinal and culinary.

CORIANDER - Annual. Uses: medicinal and culinary.

FENNEL - Perennial. Uses: medicinal, culinary and distilling.

LEMON BALM - Perennial. Uses: culinary and pot-pourri.

MARJORAM - Perennial. Uses: medicinal, culinary, cosmetics and pot-pourri.

MINT - Perennial. Uses: medicinal, culinary and pot-pourri.

PARSLEY - Biennial. Uses: medicinal, culinary and cosmetic.

ROSEMARY - Evergreen shrub. Uses: medicinal, culinary and cosmetic.

SAGE - Evergreen shrub. Uses: culinary.

SAVORY - Annual / perennial. Uses: medicinal and culinary.

TARRAGON - Perennial. Uses: culinary.

THYME - Evergreen shrub. Uses: medicinal, culinary and pot-pourri.

A selection of herbs can be grown in a small place by using a strawberry pot. Suitable plants include Chives, Fennel, Parsley, Rosemary, Sage and Thyme. Our full range of herbs is available from mid April, and we always have in stock a wide range of suitable containers.

HERBS

ALPINE STRAWBERRY - White flowers and small fruit all Summer. Moist soil, sun or part shade. Height 15 - 30cm. Makes a good skin wash. Dried foliage used for tea.

ANGELICA - A biennial / perennial plant. Requires moist but not waterlogged soil, in semi-shade. Height 1.5 - 1.8m. Uses: medicinal and culinary.

BALM - Perennial. Almost any site, average soil. Height 40-60cm. Scented leaves useful for pot-pourri. Makes a refreshing tea. Good in stuffings and soups.

- **All Gold**

- **Lemon**

- **Lemon Variegata**

BASIL - A half hardy annual of bushy growth. Requires a sheltered, sunny position with well drained soil. Height 40cm. Uses: medicinal and culinary.

- **Bush** – Bushy habit, ideal with Tomato dishes.
- **Lemon** – citrus scented leaves, ideal in salads.
- **Pesto** – Leaves have a Lemony flavour.

BAY - An aromatic, evergreen shrub or small tree. Requires a sheltered sunny position. Protect from hard frosts. Uses: medicinal and culinary. Dried leaves can be used in pot-pourri.

BERGAMOT - A hardy perennial. Herbaceous plant. Requires a sunny position with moist soil. Flowers are either pink, red, mauve, or white. Height 1m. Uses: medicinal and cosmetic.

BORAGE - Annual, with sky blue flowers. Requires sunny position and well drained soil. Bees are attracted to the flowers. Height 60cm. Uses: medicinal and culinary. A must in Pimms.

CARAWAY - Hardy biennial with white flowers. Requires open sunny site, well drained soil. Height 60 - 90cm. Uses: medicinal, distilling, and culinary.

CATMINT - Hardy herbaceous perennial. Well drained average soil, sunny site. Lavender blue flower spike May - September. Grey green foliage. Height 30cm. Cut down in autumn. Dried leaves used for tea.

CHAMOMILE - Prostrate perennial with daisy-like flowers. Requires sunny position, well-drained soil. Grows up to 15cm. Uses: medicinal. Can be used as an aromatic lawn.

- **Anthemis Flore Pleno** - Double daisy-like flowers June - August. Flowers good for pot-pourri. Aromatic flowers and foliage.
- **Anthemis Nobilis** – Daisy-like flowers June - August. Infuse flowers for refreshing tea. Can be used for small lawns.
- **Treneague** - Aromatic non-flowering form ideal for lawns. Plant 15cm apart. Mow carefully twice a year.

CHERVIL - A biennial requiring sun or part shade. Well drained soil. Resents being moved once established. Height 30-60cm. Uses: cosmetic and culinary.

CHIVES - Hardy perennial. Grass-like foliage and pink ball like flowers. Requires an open position. Height 15cm. Uses: medicinal and culinary.

COMFREY - A hardy perennial. Small flowers of pink, white or purple. Requires moist soil and open position. Height 60 - 75cm. Uses: medicinal and pharmaceutical. Can be used as a "Green Manure".

- **Dwarf** - Pale creamy yellow flowers April - May. Height 30cm.

CORIANDER - Annual. Flowers of mauve / white in umbels. Average soil, sunny sheltered position. Height 30cm. Uses: medicinal and culinary.

CURRY PLANT - An evergreen shrubby perennial of low spreading habit. Silver foliage with yellow "everlasting" flowers. Height 50cm. Uses: culinary. Useful as small shrub.

DILL - A hardy annual. Finely cut foliage with yellow flowers. Average soil, open position. Height 60 - 90cm. Uses: medicinal and culinary.

FENNEL – Erect perennial with fine hair-like foliage and small yellow flowers borne on umbels. Requires average soil and open position. Height 1 - 1.5m. Uses: medicinal, culinary, and distilling. Can be used in the back of a herbaceous border.

FENNEL, BRONZE – Perennial, Similar to Fennel, but taller and bushier growing. Requires staking. Height to 2m. Uses: As for Fennel. Suitable for herbaceous border.

FEVERFEW AND GOLDEN FEVERFEW - Hardy perennial with small white daisy-like flowers. Prefers open position in light soil where it will self-seed readily. Golden variety has yellow foliage. Height 30 - 40cm. Uses: medicinal, cosmetic and culinary. Suitable for use as herbaceous or bedding plant.

GARLIC - Perennial. Produces irregular shaped bulb in "cloves". White pompom flowers. Requires light soil in a sunny position. Uses: medicinal and culinary. Features strongly in folklore.

GARLIC CHIVES - Perennial with white flowers and flat leaves. Requires sunny position with well- drained soil. Height 50cm. Uses: culinary.

HORSERADISH - A large coarse leaved perennial producing large roots. Rich soils produce biggest roots. Height to 60cm. Uses: medicinal, culinary, and cosmetic. Lift and store roots in moist sand in autumn.

HYSSOP - An evergreen perennial with white / pink / purple flowers. Attractive to bees. Requires well-drained soil, open position. Height 45cm. Uses: medicinal, culinary and pot-pourri. Suitable for rockeries, or as a small hedge.

LAVENDER - A shrubby perennial, with flowers from white to purple and mauve. Does best in well- drained soil in an open position. Height 60 - 120cm. Uses: medicinal, culinary and pot-pourri. Can be used as low hedging.

- **Angustifolia** - Long purple flowers. Add flowers to soups, stews and salads.
- **Dutch** - Purple flowers in summer.
- **French** - Purple bracts in summer.
- **Hidcote** - Dark blue flowers. Can add flowers to soups, stews and salads.
- **Munstead** - Purple flowers; add flowers to soups, stews and salads.
- **Old English** - Light blue flowers and silver foliage.
- **Pink** - Pink flowers in summer. Use in soups and salads.

LEMON GRASS – Tender Perennial (will not over winter outside) Sunny sheltered site. Use lemon-scented leaves in cooking/herbal tea. Height 1m.

LEMON VERBENA - Herbaceous perennial. Small purple flowers. Leaves have strong lemon smell when bruised. Sheltered position. Well drained soil. Height 1.5m. Uses: culinary or bedding plant.

LOVAGE - Herbaceous perennial. Small yellow flowers in umbels. Leaves celery like. Requires a rich soil and open position. Height 1 - 2.5m. Uses: medicinal. Can be used in brewing. Useful as an herbaceous plant.

MARJORAM - A hardy perennial, but in exposed areas requires winter protection. Flowers mauve through pink to white. Requires sunny position in well-drained soil. Height, depending on variety, from 25 - 60cm. Uses: medicinal, culinary, pot-pourri and cosmetics. Also called Oregano.

- **Dwarf**
- **Golden**
- **Golden curled**
- **Pot Marjoram**
- **Sweet Marjoram**

MINT - An invasive perennial. Best grown in a planter or tub. Flowers range from blue to purple. Some leaves with cream variation. Variety of scents and flavours. Height: most varieties grow to 1m; Ginger mint to 40cm. Uses: medicinal, pharmaceutical, culinary, and pot-pourri.

- **Apple** - Good for mint sauces and jellies. Add to vegetables and salads.
- **Apple Mint Variegated** - Strong apple like scent. Cream edged foliage. Makes excellent mint sauce.
- **Basil** - An Italian mint. Peppermint scented flavour. Good in oils and vinegars.
- **Black Peppermint** - Very dark leaves. Culinary and medicinal uses, helps digestion.
- **Corsican** - Good ground cover. Tiny leaves, tiny purple flowers with peppermint scent. Can be culinary.
- **Curly** - Crisp, curled leaves. Add to vegetables and salads.
- **Garden** – Part shaded, moist soil. Spearmint flavour leaves can be dried for winter use and to make spearmint butter.
- **Ginger** - Gold / green leaves. Add to vegetables, salads and fruit salads.
- **Ginger Variegated** - Makes a refreshing tea. Leaves good for pot-pourri.
- **Moroccan** - White flowers. Culinary, excellent spearmint flavour. Does not get mint rust.
- **Peppermint** - Makes a refreshing tea. True peppermint flavour.
- **Peppermint Black** - Dark green leaves. Makes a refreshing tea.

- **Pineapple** - Cream / green leaves. Add to vegetables, salads, and fruit salads.
- **Pineapple Variegated** - Strong apple like scent. Attractive variegated foliage. Leaves may be dried for winter use.
- **Spearmint Curled** - Attractively curled leaves. Good flavour for mint sauce.
- **Spearmint Garden** - Good for mint sauces and jellies. Add to vegetables and salads.

OREGANO - See also: Marjoram.

- **Country Cream** - Perennial. Clusters of pink flowers in summer. Variegated foliage. Height 40cm. Sunny site, well-drained soil. Use in soups, stews, and omelettes.
- **Golden** - Hardy perennial. Clusters of rose purple flowers in July. Sunny site, well- drained soil. Height 30 - 45cm. Use in soups, stews, omelettes, and bouquet garni.
- **Greek** - Perennial. Sunny site, well-drained soil. Height 30 - 45cm. White - pale pink flowers. Use leaves in salads, sauces, soups, and stews. Good for bouquets garni. Add flowers to salads.
- **Vulgare** - Perennial. Sunny site, well-drained soil. Purple flowers late summer. Leaves have strong flavour. Dry leaves for winter use. Height 40cm.

PARSLEY - A biennial plant producing flat or curled bright green leaves. Requires a rich well drained soil, sun or part shade. Dead head regularly to produce more leaves. Height: depending on variety 25 - 60cm. Uses: medicinal, culinary, and cosmetic.

- **Curled**
- **French**
- **Italian**

ROSEMARY - An aromatic evergreen shrub with lavender blue flowers. Requires a sunny sheltered position with well-drained soil. Height up to 2m. Uses: medicinal, culinary, and cosmetic.

- **Corsican** - Bushy plant with blue flowers and pungent scent. Uses: culinary. Height 80cm.
- **Majorca Pink** - Pink flowers in Summer. Trailing habit. Uses: culinary. Good for lamb. Height 60cm.
- **Miss Jessopp's Upright** - Pale blue flowers, upright habit. Uses: culinary. Height 1m.
- **Pink** - Unusual pink flowers. Can use as dark hair rinse. Uses: culinary and medicinal. Height 80cm.
- **Trailing** – Small light blue flowers. Ideal for pots and tabs. Height 20cm.
- **White** - Unusual white flowers. Can use as dark hair rinse. Uses: culinary and medicinal. Height 80cm.

SAGE - A small evergreen shrub with hairy leaves. Flowers purple. Leaf colour from grey green to purple and yellow green. Some variegated forms. Requires a sunny sheltered position and average soil. Height 45 - 90cm. Uses: culinary.

- **Blackcurrant** - Perennial. Crimson flowers all Summer. Uses: culinary.
- **Common** - Perennial. Use sparingly in stuffing for duck or goose.
- **Gold** - Good green variegated foliage. Uses: culinary.
- **Narrow-Leaved** - Pretty blue flowers, aromatic leaves. Good for culinary uses.
- **Pineapple** - Half-hardy perennial with pineapple scented leaves. Striking red flowers.
- **Purple / Red** - Blue flowers. Uses: culinary. Tea makes good gargle for sore throats.
- **Tricolor** - Purple / green / cream variegated foliage. Uses: culinary.

SALAD BURNET - An erect growing perennial with tiny purple and green flowers. Fern like foliage. Requires ordinary well-drained soil and open aspect. Height 30cm. Uses: culinary.

SAVORY, WINTER - A half hardy perennial with purple / pink flowers. Requires a sunny position in well drained soil. Height 30cm. Uses: medicinal and culinary.

TARRAGON, FRENCH - A hardy perennial, aromatic foliage, and small green / white flowers. For best flavour replace every 2 - 3 years. Requires sheltered sunny position on well drained soil. Height 60 - 90cm. Uses: culinary, good with chicken.

THYME - A hardy shrublet with small purple flowers. Leaves are coloured dark green to gold, some variegated. Height 7.5 cm. Uses: medicinal, culinary, pot-pourri and cosmetic. Some varieties are suitable for the alpine garden. Can also be used to make an aromatic lawn.

- **Archer's Gold**
- **Broad Leaved**
- **Common**
- **Creeping White/Red**
- **Doone Valley**
- **Golden**
- **Lemon**
- **Lemon Variegated**
- **Pink Chintz**
- **Silver Posie**

WOODRUFF – Shade loving, creeping perennial, starry white flowers. Used medical as tonic or in pot-pourri plus leaves make delicious tea.

**This leaflet is available in
alternative formats.**

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Last updated January 2023