

DR. CHRISTOPHER'S
Herbal Legacy Newsletter

Growing an Herb Garden

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Growing an Outdoor Herb Garden

In my Herbal Vineyard, I have some 200 species of herbs, most of them medicinal. During the growing season, one of my great pleasures in life is to stroll the grounds and check on all the plants.

Growing and using these herbs is one of the most healthful activities I engage in, and I heartily recommend it. No matter what you grow, gardening is a therapeutic, self-empowering hobby.



If you do have garden space, here are the perennial medicinal herbs that I recommend.

Chasteberry: A perennial flowering shrub, this is a great herb for treating women's problems.

Goldenseal: An antibiotic herb, goldenseal grows best when planted in a shady area.

Lemon balm: Also known as melissa, this weedy antiviral mint has sedative properties. Although it sometimes looks like it has died away, it always comes back.

Mountain mint: An insect-repelling herb that should be more popular among gardeners than it is.

Oregano: Another weedy mint – a great source of antioxidants.

Self-heal: The reputation of this mint as a panacea is only slightly exaggerated.

Spearmint: This herb is about as good as peppermint for settling the stomach.

St. John's Wort: Simply the best herbal treatment for depression.

Tansy: This herb contains some of the same anti-migraine compounds as feverfew.

Valerian: The roots contain a great anxiety-relieving sedative. But be warned – the tea smells like dirty gym socks.

Wild yam: Many herbalists recommend this herb for women's reproductive health.

Willow: The willow tree's easy-peeling bark contains the herbal version of aspirin.

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Growing an Indoor Herb Garden



I love my Herbal Vineyard, but you don't need an estate – or even a yard – to grow medicinal herbs. All you need is a kitchen windowsill where you can grow a potted aloe plant – your instant, herbal emergency kit in case of accidental burns.

There are many other herbs that you can raise on a windowsill or on your back porch. If you're a city dweller, you can find space in a roof garden, courtyard,

balcony or fire escape. Quite a few medicinal-culinary species that are native to semi-arid climates will also flourish on sunny kitchen windowsills. Here are some to consider.

Basil: This insect-repelling herb is recommended for treating bad breath and headache.

Chives: Along with their cousins garlic, leeks and onions, chives help prevent cancer and treat high blood pressure.

Dill: This herb is deservedly famous as a remedy for colic and gas.

Fennel: This herb is good for treating upset stomach and indigestion.

Hyssop: Mentioned in the Bible, hyssop contains several antiviral compounds and is useful in treating herpes. (It's also under review as an AIDS therapy.)

Lavender: Some varieties of this lovely herb are loaded with sedative compounds that can penetrate the skin. Toss a handful into your bathwater if you want a nice-smelling way to relax.

Parsley: Best known as a great source of chlorophyll for combating bad breath, parsley is rich in zinc, which is good for men's reproductive health.

Peppermint: This a major source of cooling, soothing, stomach-settling menthol.

Rosemary: Rich in antioxidants, this tasty culinary spice may help prevent Alzheimer's disease.

Sage: Sage shares much of the medicinal potential of rosemary.

Savory: Europeans add this herb to bean dishes to reduce flatulence.

Thyme: This is one of the best sources of thymol, an antiseptic, stomach-soothing compound that helps prevent the blood clots that cause heart attack.