



Growing and Cooking Healthy  
with Fresh Herbs

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# Types of Herbs

- Annuals – bloom one season and die
  - Examples: anise, basil, chervil
- Biennials – live 2 seasons, bloom 2<sup>nd</sup> season only
  - Examples: caraway and parsley
- Perennials – overwinter, blooms each season once established
  - Examples: chives, majoram, mint, tarragon, thyme



# Good beginner herbs

- Strong herbs – winter savory, rosemary, sage
- Herbs strong enough for accent – sweet basil, dill, mint, sweet majoram, thyme
- Herbs for blending – chives, parsley, summer savory

# Herb Gardens and Beds



# Herbs in Outdoor Containers



# Various Indoor Options





# Great Indoor Herbs

- Chives
- Thyme
- Tarragon
- Sweet Marjoram
- Sage
- Oregano
- Rosemary



# Harvesting Herbs

- Outdoors
  - Best time is in the morning after the dew has dried
  - Cut annuals off at ground level
  - Cut perennials about one-third down the main stem
- Indoors
  - Avoid harvesting more than 50% of the plant





# Herb Preparation

- Wash with the leaves on the stems in lightly **cold** water
  - Remove soil, dust, bugs or other foreign material
- Drain thoroughly on absorbent towels or upside down in the sun until the water evaporates



# Drying Herbs

- Natural or Air Drying
  - Dry in the dark, warm (70-80 F), well-ventilated room by hanging plants upside down in bunches in paper bags
    - Retain some green color
    - Allows essential oils to flow from stems to leaves
  - Leaves ready when they feel dry and crumbly approx. 1 to 2 weeks
- Oven Drying
  - Place on cookie sheet or pan no more than 1 inch deep
  - Heat oven less than 180 F leave door open for about 2 to 4 hrs



# Drying Seeds

- Place seed heads on cloth or paper
- When partially dry, rub seeds gently between palms to remove dirt and hulls
- Spread clean seed in thin layers on cloth or paper until thoroughly dry – 2 weeks or longer
- OR – hang whole plant upside down inside a paper bag
  - Bag will catch the seeds as they dry




# Freezing Herbs

- Chives, Sage, Italian parsley (and other large flat-leaved herbs)
  - Remove stems from sage or parsley
  - Rinse if you must, but pat perfectly dry by blotting with a terry towel (wet leaves will turn black when frozen)
  - Pack leaves into a ziploc bag roll the bag tightly like a cigar until all the air is out
  - Suck remaining air out with a drinking straw
  - Seal, tie bag with string or elastic bands and freeze
- To use: pull out of freezer and cut off a portion and return to freeze



# Freezing – Pesto Cubes

- Tender-leaved herbs – basil and oregano
  - Chop 2 cups of leaves with  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of olive oil in food processor
  - Spoon into ice-cube trays
  - After froze pop out of trays and transfer to freezer bags
- To use: drop cube into a steaming pot of stew or add remaining ingredients for pesto



# Freezing Woody-Stemmed Herbs

- Wood-stemmed herbs – rosemary, thyme
  - Remove leaves by cutting sprigs, lay on paper-towel-lined baking sheet and freeze
  - Remove next day and give a toss; almost every leaf will shake loose
  - Discard stems, shape the towel into a funnel and pour the leaves into air-tight jars or plastic tubs, then freeze
- To use: Remove from container as needed