

The "Top Ten" Herbs for Indoor Gardening Success



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You can grow many varieties of herbs indoors, but we've selected ten with the best inside track record



BASIL (*Ocimum basilicum*): Start your winter basil from seed. Basil is a short-lived annual, and plants that have been growing in your garden since May won't last very long if you bring them indoors now. Place your young plants in a south window with lots

of sun, and feed with liquid seaweed or odorless fish emulsion. Keep basil warmer than other herbs. Pinch off flowers as they appear. Globe basil forms an attractive, round, 1-foot bush.

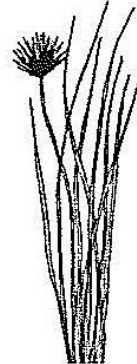
BAY (*Laurus nobilis*): This beautiful perennial grows very well in a container, and it can be trained into a "standard" or lollipop shape. Bay will thrive in an east or west



window. A slow grower, it is dormant in winter and requires less frequent watering than other herbs. Water only when the top of the soil is dry, or the container feels light. Don't crowd bay; it needs good air circulation. This herb is really a small tree that can grow over 5 feet tall in a container, so replot it when you see roots coming out of the drainage holes.

needs light to germinate — just press the seeds gently into the medium, mist lightly, and lay a piece of plastic or glass across the top of the pot. Then place it where temperatures stay between 65 and 70 degrees both day and night.

CHIVES (*Allium schoenoprasum*): It takes too long to grow a cuttable clump of chives from seed, so it's best to replot a section of an established plant or buy a new, small cluster for your indoor garden. Leave your pot of chives outside until the leaves die back and days begin to shorten. In early winter, move it to your coolest indoor location for a few



days, then finally to your brightest window. Water when the soil begins to dry, and provide good air circulation. Chives will live for years in a pot. Harvest whole individual leaves, not just the tops, by cutting them off about 1 inch above soil level.



OREGANO (*Origanum* spp.): Depending on its species, this herb can vary in taste. The culinary, Greek or Italian types are best for cooking. Be sure the oregano plant you buy (or take from

cuttings — it may not grow true from seed) smells like pizza. Place in a south window.



CHERVIL (*Anthriscus cerefolium*): Although chervil might grow too tall and gangly for some windowsills, it's included here because it does well in low light. Fast-growing chervil should be started from seed in late summer in

the container in which it will grow. Chervil

PARSLEY (*Petroselinum crispum*): Sow parsley seed, or pot one of your garden parsley plants, in a deep container. This plant has a long taproot and needs some extra



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space. Germination is slow (nine to 21 days). Soaking and/or freezing the seeds improves germination. Throw away the soaking water. Harvest parsley by cutting the outer leaves; the plant grows from the center. Parsley likes full sun but will grow in an east or west window.



mer, place a mature plant in a medium-size pot and leave it outside until the leaves die back. Bring it to your coolest indoor spot for a few days, then place it in a south window for as much sun as possible. Be sure the plant is well-fed with



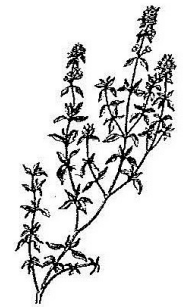
ROSEMARY (*Rosemarinus officinalis*): Don't let rosemary plants dry out completely, or they'll die, especially in late winter when the plant begins to put forth new growth. Water well, but, as with all herbs, be sure they drain adequately. Propagate by cutting or layering to produce plants faster

than growing from seed. Rosemary loves a south window, but will tolerate an eastern or western exposure.

a good organic fertilizer, such as fish emulsion. (Or consider growing Mexican marigold, a good tarragon substitute.)

THYME (*Thymus vulgaris*):

This is another herb that offers hundreds of varieties, so let your imagination go. Start new plants by placing non-woody cuts in moist sterile mix until roots appear, and then pot them in potting soil. If you pot a garden grown thyme plant for the winter, be sure to acclimate it and check for insects before moving it indoors. Thyme likes full sun but will grow in an east or west window.



SAGE (*Salvia officinalis*): Easily grown from tip cuttings, sage will grow well in a container for up to two years. It can withstand dryness and warmer daytime temperatures better than other herbs. Pineapple sage is grown mostly for its aroma and the exotic taste it adds to fruit salads. Place all sages (and there are hundreds of varieties) in south windows.



Now that your indoor herb garden is firmly planted (in your mind, at least!), grab some pots and get started. Don't forget to USE those herbs: cook with them (everything from eggs to breads to meats to vegetables) pinch their leaves to release fragrance into the air; snip some leaves for making herb vinegars... Enjoy!

TARRAGON (*Artemisia dracunculus*): This herb needs a dormant period in late fall or early winter to grow successfully indoors. In sum-



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