

# What's Growing On in the garden?

Germantown Hills School Garden Newsletter

May 7, 2007

## *Basil*

Light: Sun

Height: 2 feet

Spacing: 1 foot

Type: Annual

Uses: Casseroles, eggs, fish, sauces, salads, fragrance

Other: Keep flowers removed to last longer. Plants may be purple or green.



## *Lavender*

Light: Light shade to sun

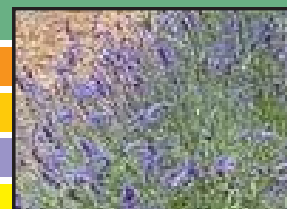
Height: Depends on variety

Spacing: Averages 1-2 feet

Type: Perennial

Uses: Fragrance, landscaping

Other: Well-drained, dry soil. This may not be winter-hardy in our zone. In really cold winters, lavender may die out.



## *Catnip*

Light: Sun to part-shade

Height: 2 feet

Spacing: 1 foot

Type: Perennial

Uses: Used to stuff cat toys

Other: Cats Love this plant! Protect small new planted transplants from possible cat attack.



## *Oregano*

Light: Sun

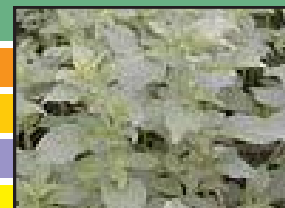
Height: 1 foot

Spacing: 1-2 feet

Type: Semi-hardy perennial

Uses: Spanish, Mexican & Italian cooking; stuffing

Other: Seed grown plants best for everlastings. Use vegetatively propagated plants for culinary uses.



## *Chives*

Light: Sun

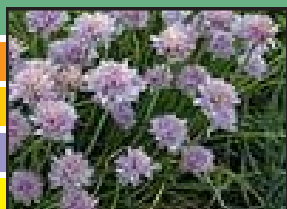
Height: 8-12 inches

Spacing: Close in a row or bunches

Type: Perennial

Uses: Soups, salads, eggs, cheese, fragrance

Other: Cut often to keep vigorous. Flowers are edible garnishes.



## *Parsley*

Light: Sun or Shade

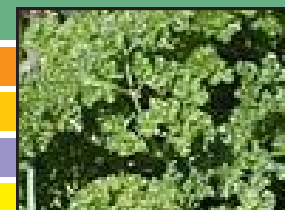
Height: 8-12 inches

Spacing: 8 inches

Type: Treat as an annual

Uses: Garnish soups, salads, casseroles, vegetables, etc. Blends well with other herbs & is used as a flavor base.

Other: Cut outer leaves first.



## *Dill*

Light: Sun

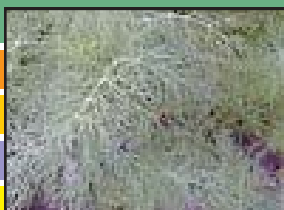
Height: 3 - 3 1/2 feet

Spacing: 9 inches

Type: Annual

Uses: Flavoring pickles, salads, omelets, herb blends

Other: Easily grown from seed.



## *Rosemary*

Light: Sun

Height: 1-3 feet

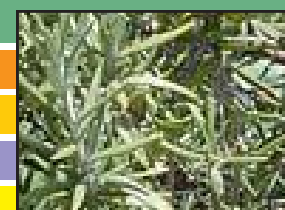
Spacing: 12-18 inches

Type: Treat as an annual

Uses: Meat, punches, jellies, etc.

Fragrance : Strong, spicy scent

Other: Keep soil moist but not wet.



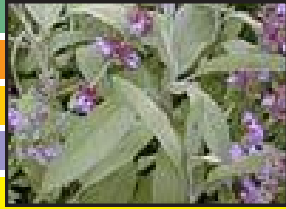
## Sage

Light: Sun

Height: 18-24 inches

Spacing: 15-18 inches

Type: Perennial



Uses: Cheese, sausages, meats, fish, salads, drinks, casseroles, landscaping

Other: Colored varieties not as hardy as green varieties. Typically hardy to Zone 5b. Since we are Zone 5a, we may have some die.

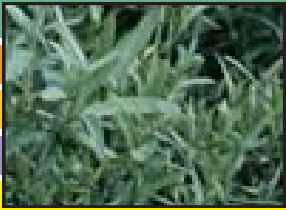
## Tarragon

Light: Sun, but tolerates light shade

Height: 2 feet

Spacing: 1 foot

Type: Perennial



Uses: Fish, meat, salads, vinegar (Use sparingly)

Other: Licorice-like flavor. Likes dry soil. Use root cuttings or stem cuttings.

## Thyme

Light: Sun

Height: 4-8 inches

Spacing: 3-10 inches

Type: Perennial



Uses: Soups, stuffings, meats (Use sparingly)

Other: Needs good drainage. Cut back each year. Divide old plants.

*Please feel free to contact either Cathy or Linda with your garden questions and comments. We encourage you to use the garden as the valuable educational resource that it can be.*

## Tips for Preserving Herbs



The shelf life of many herbs is one to two years but this period is shorter when herbs are exposed to light, heat and open air. Herb leaves keep their flavor best when they are stored whole and crushed just before use. When herb seeds are to be used for cooking, the seeds should be stored whole and ground up as needed.

### Bag Drying

To prepare plants for drying, remove blossoms from the herb plant and rinse the leaves on the stem in cold water to remove soil. Allow plants to drain on absorbent towels until dry. Then place the herbs in a paper bag and tie the stems. Leave 1 to 2 inches of the stems exposed. This allows the plant oil to flow from the stems to the leaves. Place the bag in a warm, dry location. In about one to two weeks, when the leaves become brittle, tap them free of the stems and the leaves will fall into the bag. Store leaves in an airtight container away from the light.

### Tray Drying

Clean herbs as for bag drying but the heavy stalks can be discarded. Put the leafed stems one layer deep on a tray in a dark, ventilated room. Turn over the herbs occasionally for uniform drying. The leaves are ready for storage when they are dry and the stems are tough.

### Microwave Drying

If you have a microwave oven, you can use it to dry herbs. Place the herbs between paper towels and set them on the rack. Close the door and turn the oven on a medium setting for about 2-3 minutes. Then check for dryness; the leaves should feel brittle and should crumble easily. If they are not done, turn the oven on for 30 seconds longer. Although this process actually cooks the herbs, the end product is just about the same as air drying. Store the dried herbs in closed containers.



## Websites and Resources

*This is an excellent resource for herbs:*  
<http://www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/herbs/>

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