

## Growing Herbs For Your Medicine Chest

Herbs are a common staple in American cooking. How else would food get such great taste? Ok, aside from the chemical laden food additives we put on our foods today, herbs are the forefathers of taste. If you have been to any large supermarket lately, you may have noticed how much more space the produce department has dedicated to herbs. That is mainly because of the knowledge explosion about what herbs can do for your overall health. If you are considering using herbs as a medicinal tool, you will have a choice to make. Should you purchase your herbs at the local market or should you grow them yourself? Obviously, as a believer in herbal medicine, I believe there is nothing better for you than ingesting your own hand grown herbs. Nowadays, there are too many reasons to doubt that your herbs were "handled with care". In other words, polluted by chemicals and pesticides. To start your own herb garden you need to determine which location is better for you, inside or out. There are many herbs that can be grown inside. Furthermore, if you are going to grow herbs for medicinal and cooking purposes, having them inside at your fingertips is very convenient. You may even consider a small indoor selection for the herbs you use most and utilize the outdoor garden for the herbs you will use more sparingly. So, which herbs are best for your situation? If you are going to plant indoors, here is a modest list of herbs that are very windowsill friendly: \* Basil, chives, dill, fennel, hyssop, lavender, parsley, peppermint, rosemary, sage, savory and thyme. If you are going to plant outdoors, the following plants will flourish beautifully. These are all perennial medicinal herbs and do well for anyone in a temperate climate. \* Chasteberry, goldenseal, lemon balm, mint, oregano, spearmint, St. Johns Wort, tansy, valerian, wild yam and willow. Of course, the list is enormous. There are so many herbs available today that it would be impossible to list them all. However, this serves as a good place to start. Consult a good gardening book once you know exactly which herbs you are going to grow. Once you have a good working garden established, you will need to figure out how you will harvest the crop. Snipping off leaves is by far the best way to go. In fact, the more you snip them the more medicinal they become. Of course there are other methods such as crushing, which mutilate the entire plant. If you are going to preserve the herbs for later use, I would recommend drying them in paper bags. If your garden is outdoors in a colder climate, I would highly recommend doing this at least once before the first freeze so you can enjoy your herbs all winter long. Herbs should be stored in a cool dark place. To maintain herbs potency it is essential to keep them away from light, heat and oxygen as much as possible. Growing an herb garden does not have to be complicated. It is really quite simple. Furthermore, there is nothing like creating your own medicine chest. Mother nature has provided all the medicine we need and placed it at our fingertips.

## About the Author

University of Massachusetts Medical School site providing tutorials and links to database.

Source: <http://www.productsherbal.com>