

Herbs

All Zones

This crazy warm weather has me wanting to go out and plant in the yard; however, I know better. It's still too early for most plants. I took off to the nursery department to curb my itch for planting. Herbs are one of my favorite things in the world to have on hand for cooking, entertaining or to just perfume the air. Much to my surprise I found a good selection. In fact, my nursery had a very nice assortment of parsley, oregano, thyme, mint, sage, chives and even basil. A lot of herbs are from the Mediterranean and need good drainage plus lots of sun. We can grow almost any of them in Calaveras, Amador and Tuolumne counties; we just need to change the way we plant. In the warmer regions, most herbs will do just fine in well -drained garden soil. In the higher elevations, plant in large containers, then bring them into a sheltered location during the cold winter months. Whatever the choice, herbs make a beautiful addition to the garden and are easy to grow.

Since it's still technically winter, I decided to plant them in a hanging basket to keep near my kitchen door. I grabbed a nice metal hanging basket, a coco basket liner, and a bag of potting mix. I lined the coco basket with a small piece of plastic and filled it half way with soil. I used shears to cut 4, X- shaped incisions into the side of the coco liner, about 2 inches down from the top to enable planting from the sides. I then removed the little herbs from their containers and carefully pulled the foliage through the X shaped holes to the outside of the basket, being careful not to break the plants.

Next I filled the basket with soil and planted the remaining herbs in the top. For added interest, I included few Johnny- Jump-ups, Nasturtiums and lettuce starts. Dense planting provides a lush and abundant basket. Mine will stay indoors on a plant stand until it's safe to put outside. Water regularly and fertilize with diluted fish emulsion or an organic all- purpose fertilizer.

Novella Springer

Calaveras Master Gardener