

Environmental Horticulture Notes

EHN15

LANDSCAPING WITH HERBS

Definition of an Herb: The word “herb” comes from the Latin word “herba”, which means grass or green plant. Most herbs are herbaceous, which means a plant without a permanent woody stem. However, the broad term of “herb” often includes flowers, vegetables, grasses, and even trees.

BASIC LANDSCAPING GUIDELINES TO CONSIDER PRIOR TO PLANTING

- Plan according to your lifestyle. Take into consideration the amount of time you have to devote to your garden, what you want to use your yard for – children playing, entertaining, etc.
- Consider the type of garden you desire: formal, informal, perennial, rock, knot garden, container, woodland setting, erosion control, as companion to vegetables, etc.
- Consider whether the plant will attract bees (if so, don't plant near a pool or play yard), and whether the garden will harmonize with your home's architecture.
- Consider shape and use of plants. Some herbs can be used as hedges or fencing. Consider garden type – raised beds, pathways, Japanese gardens, formal gardens, rock gardens, etc.
- Gather information about specific herbs to ensure that the variety you desire is obtained. There are many varieties of common herbs. For example, there are twenty true mint species and over 500 sage species.

DEVELOP A LANDSCAPE PLAN ON PAPER AND CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING

- Tree roots – area of root space a tree requires versus where herbs are located.
- Irrigation systems – different watering requirements of different herbs.
- Annuals, Perennials – dormancy period of perennials and replanting of annuals.
- Height and width of plants – avoid hidden plants and realize growth size of mature plants.
- Soil and water preferred by plant – some herbs require sandy soil and others a rich, moist soil.
- Hours of sunlight – most herbs need 5 to 8 hours minimum.
- Soil drainage – some herbs require a drier soil and others a moist soil.
- Colors and styles you wish to create.

INDOOR HERB GARDENING

- Herbs indoors prefer a south facing window and a minimum five hours of sunlight.
- Florescent lights can be used 6 inches above the plants and the lights must be on for 14 to 16 hours a day.
- Lighting systems or grow lights are optional.
- Good drainage is required. Use appropriate pot size for each individual plant. Indoor herb plants can be rotated with plants in containers outdoors. Monitor for insects before returning plants to indoor area.

GATHERING AND USING HERBS

Harvest each herb according to their specific requirements for optimal flavor. Best harvest times are in the late morning after dew is gone. This ensures that the essential oils of the plant are at the optimal level and the scent is maintained. Herbs do not particularly need to be cleaned once harvested. If insects or dirt is present on the herbs, you can rinse the herbs under the tap. Herbs can also be soaked in a container of cool water and this water changed until there is no sign of dirt and/or insects. Remove distorted or chewed leaves. Herbs can be used fresh or dried. Pat herbs dry and hang in a non-ventilated space upside down to dry. Dry herbs in small bundles. Herb drying racks or baskets can be used to dry herbs. It is crucial to provide air circulation

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for herbs to dry and maintain their color. Some herbs can turn brown when proper drying methods are not observed. Be particularly careful with peppermint and lemon balm. These herbs will turn brown if exposed to moisture during the drying process.

Pesticides can be avoided by following proper Integrated Pest Management strategies. For information on Integrated Pest Management, call the Sacramento County UC Master Gardener office at (916) 875-6913.

SHADE

Sweet Woodruff
Mints
Violets

PARTIAL SHADE

Angelica
Bee Balm
Catnip
Chamomile
Chervil
Chives
Costmary
Feverfew
Geraniums
Lemon Balm
Lovage
Parsley
Bay
Sweet Cicely
Tarragon
Yarrow

DROUGHT TOLERANT

Artemesia
Germander
Horehound
Lambs ears
Lavender
Old roses
Rosemary
Sage
Santolina
Thyme
Yarrow

FRAGRANT

Bee Balm
Costmary
Lavender
Lemon Balm

FRAGRANT (cont.)

Lemon Thyme
Marjoram
Mints
Oregano
Old Roses
Rosemary
Scented Geraniums

TEA GARDEN

Bee Balm
Borage
Catnip
Chamomile
Costmary
Lemon Balm
Lemon Thyme
Mints
Parsley
Rosemary
Sage

CULINARY GARDEN

Basil
Bay
Chives
Dill
Garlic
Lovage
Marjoram
Mints
Nasturtiums
Oregano
Parsley
Rosemary
Sage
Savory
Sorrell
Tarragon
Watercress

GRAY AND SILVER GARDEN

Artemesia
Catmint
Germander
Gray Santolina
Horehound
Lambs ear
Lavender
Sage
Silver Thyme
Wormwood
Yarrow

FLOWERS

Bee Balm
Calendula
Chamomile
Feverfew
Lavender
Old Roses
Yarrow

EDGING

Chives
Dwarf Rosemary
Dwarf Sage
Hyssop
Santolina
Thyme

HERBS FOR BEEKEEPERS

Basil
Bee balm
Borage
Catnip
Chamomile
Chicory
Fennel
Germander

HERBS FOR BEEKEEPERS (cont.)

Hyssop
Lavender
Lemon Balm
Marjoram
Rosemary
Sage
Savory
Thyme

HANGING BASKETS

Catnip
Marjoram
Mints
Rosemary
Thyme

INDOOR PLANTS

Aloe Vera
Basil
Catnip
Chives,
Garlic Chives
Lavender
Lemon Balm
Marjoram
Oregano
Parsley
Rosemary
Sage
Scented Leafed
Geraniums
Winter Savory
Thyme