

# CULINARY HERBS: FROM GARDEN TO GOURMET

A Collaborative Presentation by the  
UC Master Gardeners & UC Master Food Preservers  
of El Dorado County



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**Cameron Park Community Center**  
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# Plan For Today

- Exits & Restrooms
- PowerPoint [mgeldorado.ucanr.edu](http://mgeldorado.ucanr.edu)
- References
- Propagating from seeds & cuttings
- Questions
- Publications for Sale






# Culinary Herbs

- Definition & Latin Names
- Why Grow Herbs?
- Where to grow herbs and what they want
- Propagating – Seeds & Cuttings
- Harvesting & Preserving
- Herbs that Grow Well in El Dorado County





*Any plant whose leaves,  
flowers, roots are used  
for flavor, fragrance,  
medicines, cosmetics or  
dyes.*

# Herb vs. Spice

- Spice
  - The hard parts of the plant such as roots, bark or seeds
- Herbs
  - The softer parts of the plant including the stems, leaves, flowers





# Coriandrum sativum



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# Coriandrum sativum

- The Herb or herbaceous stage of the plant is Cilantro
- The Spice we know as coriander is the seed.
- Day length, sunlight and temperature influence flowering and seed setting.
- Daylight longer than 12 hours will cause cilantro to bolt. Dill also.



# THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX



**Kieffer Lime (*Citrus hystrix*)**



# Latin Names Matter

- Common Name vs. Latin name (or Botanical or Scientific)
- Remember, these are plants you're using for food – be sure you have the correct plant.



# Coriandrum sativum – Coriander/Cilantro

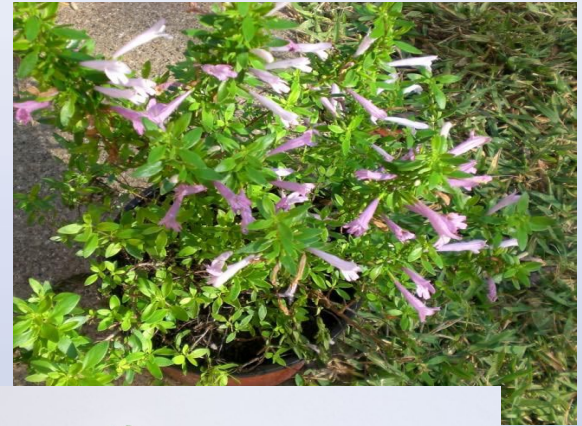
- Vietnamese Coriander, *Persicaria odorata*  
*Herbaceous perennial, spreads via root system, invasive in mild-winter areas. Leaves have cilantro flavor.*
- Mexican Coriander, *Eryngium foetidum*  
*Biennial herb grown as warm-season annual. To 16" tall, spiny. Cilantro flavored leaves.*



# Oregano

Mexican Oregano

*Poliomintha longiflora*



Cuban Oregano

*Plectranthus amboinicus*



Italian Oregano

*Origanum vulgare*





# Why Grow Culinary Herbs

- Quality and Cost
- Fresh herbs always available
- Healthy way to add flavor to food & beverages



# Why Grow Culinary Herbs

## Edible Flowers





# Why Grow Culinary Herbs?

They are Beautiful and Make Excellent Companion Plants. You get TWO plants for the water of ONE.





# Why Grow Culinary Herbs?

**Relieve stress**

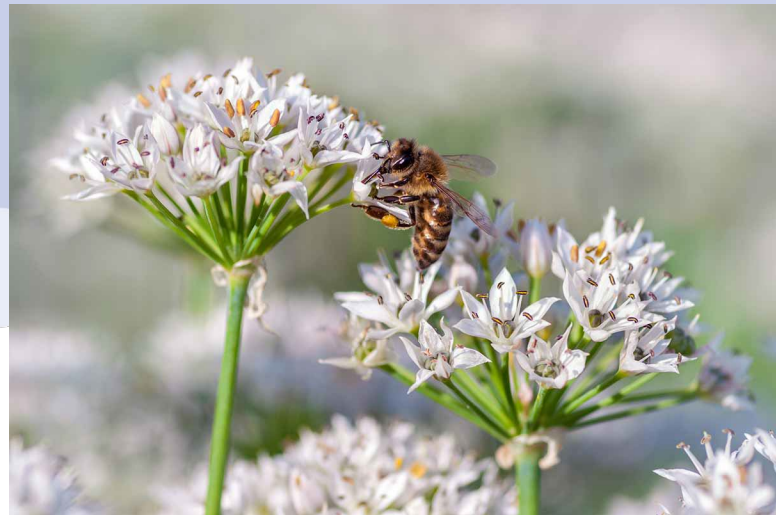


# Herbs are an excellent food source for Pollinators

**Butterflies** – Chives, thyme, marjoram, mint, parsley

**Bees** – Basil, lemon balm, lavender, sage, savory, rosemary, dill, thyme, chives, fennel, mint

**Hummers** – Lavender, sage, mint, rosemary, mexican oregano



# Deer Resistant Herbs?????

- Sage
- Thyme
- Nepeta
- Oregano
- Mint
- Lavender
- Rosemary







# HERB GARDEN SITES



# Location

- 4 - 6 hours sun
- Well drained soil
- Freedom from woody plant roots & erosion
- Access to water
- Convenient for regular visits



# Paths



# Tubs





# Containers





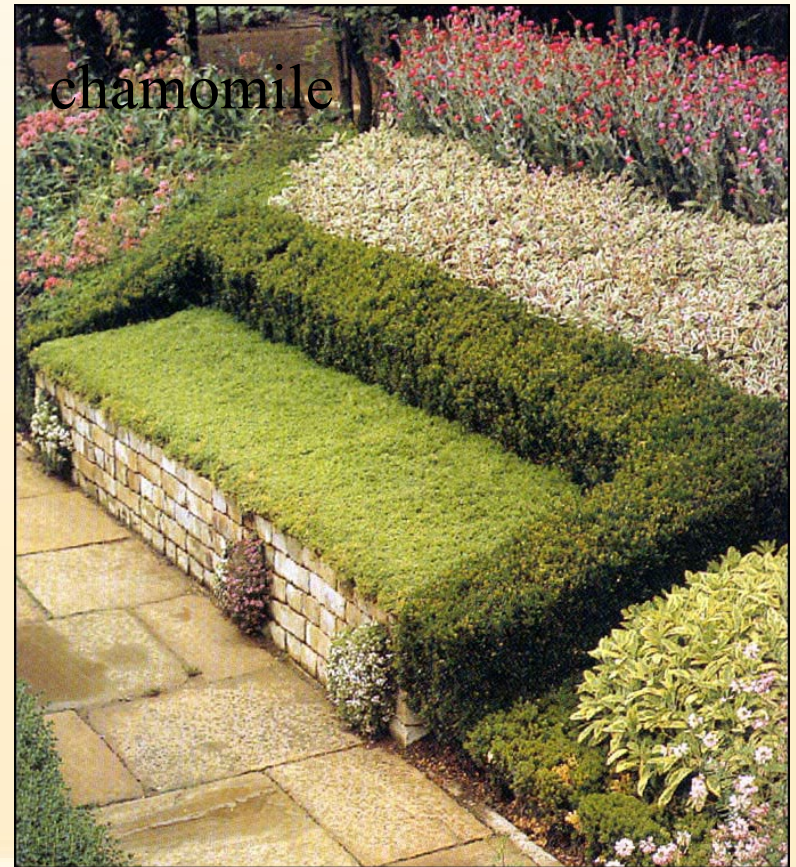
# More Containers



Container size is important



# Bench





# Rock Garden



# Companion Plantings







# Planting Herbs



# Soil Composition

- Well drained
- Add organic matter
- Raised beds
- MULCH!!



# Irrigation

- Many herbs are drought tolerant
- Deep, infrequent watering
- Annuals may require more water (especially if in pots)
- Types of irrigation
  - Best - Soaker hoses & Drip irrigation
  - Not recommended - Overhead sprinklers & hand watering

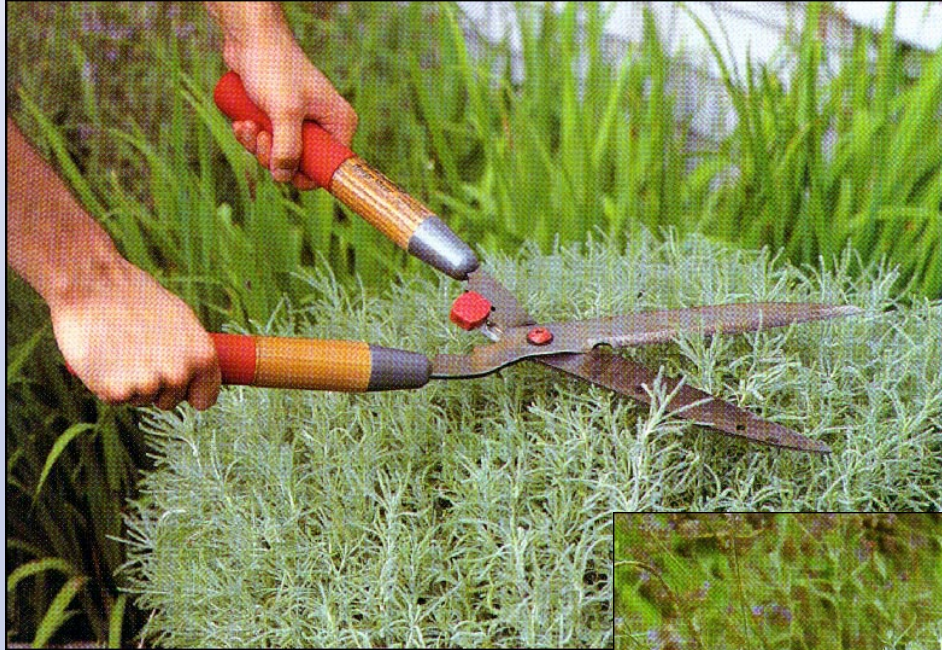


# Fertilizer

- Balanced fertilizer in spring
  - N : nitrogen
  - P : phosphorus
  - K : potassium
  - Worm Compost or castings or fish emulsion
- Think lightly, half strength
- Annual herbs



# Pruning



Spring



# Pinching



- Remove flower buds
- Cut back top growth
- Important for culinary herbs – promotes bushy growth & prevents plant from going to seed



# Deadheading



# Pests and Diseases

- Provide good air circulation
- Provide well drained soil
- Fertilize sparingly
- Herbs that repel pests:
  - Sage, Rosemary, Lavender, Basil, Garlic and Mint









# PROPAGATING HERBS



- Seeds
- Cuttings
- Layering
- Division



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# Propagating from SEEDS

- Select a sterile germinating medium.
- Select thoroughly clean containers.
- Fill container to ¼" from top with moistened medium.
- Firm medium with fingers or block of wood to provide a uniform, flat surface.
- Sow seed thinly & uniformly at the depth recommended on seed packet, or 2 – 4 times the diameter of the seed.

# Propagating from Seed, con't.

- Moisten thoroughly using low pressure mist or place temporarily in tray to water from bottom. Keep soil uniformly moist.
- Cover with plastic dome & place on heat mat until first leaves appear.
- Then place in bright south facing window or under grow lights.



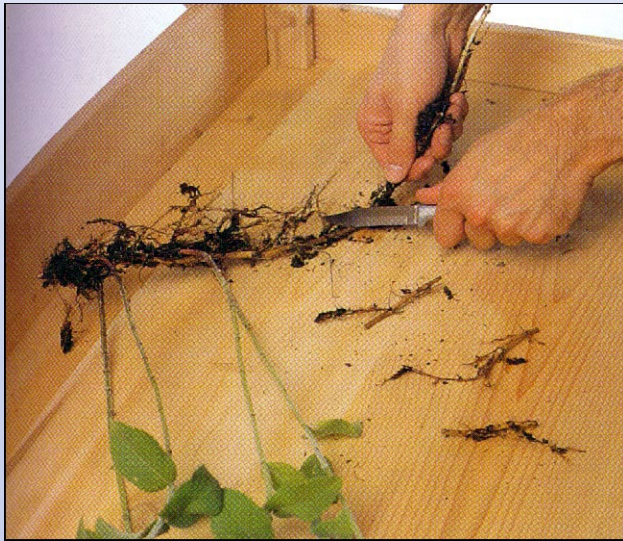


# Propagating from Seed, con't.

- When first true leaves appear, begin fertilizing with half strength soluble fertilizer.
- Two weeks before planting, begin “hardening” the seedlings by gradually exposing them to the outdoor environment.



# Cuttings



Root cuttings



Stem cuttings



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# Propagating from Cuttings

Softwood Stem Cuttings: Propagate at new spring growth.

Semi-hardwood Cuttings: Propagate between mid-July to early September.

Hardwood Cuttings: Propagate between October to late winter.

# Propagating from Cuttings, con't.

- Pre-moisten rooting medium.
- Fill pot  $\frac{3}{4}$  full.
- Poke a hole with pencil or similar object.
- Cut stems and immediately place in water.
- Trim off lower leaves and trim size/quantity of upper leaves (soft/semi-hardwood).
- Recut stem just below node.



# Propagating from Cuttings, con't.

- Re-dip in water.
- Immediately dip in rooting hormone (liquid or dry).
- Place gently into pot.
- Mist (soft/semi-hardwood).
- Place pot under dome and mist daily (soft/semi-hardwood OR keep in dark cool area until roots have formed (hardwood)).



# Layering



# Layering

- Many plants self layer – mints, oregano, rosemary, thyme, savory & lavender
- Dig hole or use pot
- Fasten stem over hole
- Fill hole with soil and keep damp



# Dividing





# Dividing

- When: Early spring for fall blooming plants or fall for spring blooming plants
- Dig out root ball and soil
- Use knife, shovel, trowel to split off healthy sections.
- Good for chives, oregano, tarragon, sorrel



# HARVESTING & PRESERVING



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# When & How Much



- In the morning
- Throughout the season
- When flower buds appear



# Drying Herbs



- Remove discolored leaves
- Make small bundles
- Hang upside down
- Warm, airy, dry location
- Away from direct sunlight
- Good air circulation

# Drying Trays



Good



Not So Good

Keep drying area free of dust. Done when “crispy” dryness.



# Drying Seeds



Hang upside down in a paper bag.



# Other Drying Methods



- Drying Pantry
- Dehydrator



# Storage

- Package whole leaves if possible
- Use airtight containers
- Store away from direct sunlight, heat and humidity
- If any moisture is detected after placing in storage container, it's not dry enough.



# Freezing Herbs

- For herbs that lose flavor when dried
  - Cilantro, basil, chives
- Freeze whole
- Mince & freeze in water in ice cube tray
- Make into paste & freeze
  - 1/2 c oil/2 c packed herbs
  - Pesto



# **CULINARY HERBS THAT GROW WELL IN EL DORADO COUNTY**



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# Dill

## *Anethum graveolens*

- Annual
- Appearance
  - Tall, single stem
  - Feathery, thread-like blue-green leaves
  - Flat umbel flower, 6" across
- Propagate from seed
- Uses
  - Leaves are used in salads and as a garnish for pickles
  - Seeds used as flavoring in cooked veggies

NOTE: Will bolt when day light reaches 12 hours.



# Cilantro

## *Coriandrum sativum*

- Annual
- Appearance
  - Bright green, finely grooved stems
  - Upper leaves finely divided
- Propagate: seeds
- Uses
  - Culinary: popular in Asian, Latin and African cooking
    - In shell fish and salads
    - Seeds used in baking and pickling
- Note: Will bolt when day light reaches 12 hours





# Tarragon

## *Artemisia dracunculus*

- Perennial
- Appearance
  - Linear to lance like, in groups of 3
- Propagate by cuttings, division
  - Seeds may not be “French tarragon”
- Uses
  - Culinary, “French Fines Herbs”
  - Used with fish, in herb butters and mayo, cream sauces and to flavor vinegar
- Note
  - Over-winter mulch
  - Keep soil from getting too wet



# Sage

## *Salvia officinalis*

- Perennial
- Appearance
  - Woody shrub with a wide variety of leaf size, shapes and colors
- Propagate by cuttings
- Uses
  - Attractive in wreaths and arrangements
  - Primary use is culinary in salads or flavoring for fatty meats; vinegars, butters
  - Dried to discourage insects



# Thyme

## *Thymus vulgaris*

- Perennial
- Appearance
  - Low evergreen shrub
  - Small white/pink flowers
- Propagation by layering
- Uses
  - Mostly culinary as flavoring or garnish
  - Garden ornamental,
- Note
  - Many species, and can range in height from 1" to 1'





# Lemon Balm

## *Melissa officinalis*

- Perennial
- Appearance
  - In clumps to 3'
  - Bright green leaves, deeply veined
- Use
  - Strong lemony scent is a good flavoring
  - Potpourri, sachets
- Note
  - Spreads rapidly
  - Good in pots
  - Prune to keep compact



# Mints

## *Mentha spp*

- Perennial
- Appearance
  - Shrubby to 3 ft
  - Glossy green leaves with small flowers in summer and fall
- Propagate by division when dormant
- Use
  - Culinary as flavoring or oil
  - Decorative ornamental
- Note
  - Very invasive, plant in pots
  - Many varieties



# Bay

## *Laurus nobilis*

- Evergreen tree or shrub
- Appearance
  - Tree/shrub, slowly growing to 40 feet in ground
  - Leathery green leaves
- Propagate from cuttings
- Use
  - Leaves as flavoring for soups, stews, sauces
- Note
  - Grows well and for a long time in pots
  - Good for topiary





# Rosemary

## *Rosemary officinalis*

*Salvia Rosmarinus* (2017)

- Perennial
- Appearance
  - Shrub with evergreen, needlelike leaves
  - Blue, lavender, white flowers
  - Upright & prostrate varieties
  - Propagate by layering or cuttings
- Uses
  - Landscape shrub
  - Culinary flavoring, dried or fresh



# Lavender

## *Lavendula spp.*

- Perennial
- Appearance
  - 6" to 4'
  - Green to gray narrow leaves, some fern-like
  - White to deep purple flowers on spikes
- Propagate by division
- Uses
  - Mostly aromatic, perfumes, potpourri
  - Excellent in fresh & dried arrangements
- Note:
  - Many, many varieties



# Scented Geranium

## *Pelargonium geraniaceae*

- Perennial
- Appearance
  - Varied and interesting leaf patterns
  - Insignificant flowers
- Propagate by stem cuttings
- Uses
  - Culinary in teas, jellies
  - Potpourri
- Note
  - Scent is in the leaves: rose, lemon, peppermint, apple, coconut, nutmeg, etc
  - Frost sensitive





# Lemon Verbena

## *Aloysia triphylla*

- Perennial
- Appearance
  - Woody shrub to 5+' in EDC
  - Deciduous
  - Long pale, green pointed leaves
- Propagate from stem cuttings
- Uses
  - Culinary in tea
  - Lemon flavoring in salad dressings
  - Potpourri
- Note
  - sensitive to cold, protect in winter



# Calendula

## *Calendula officinalis*

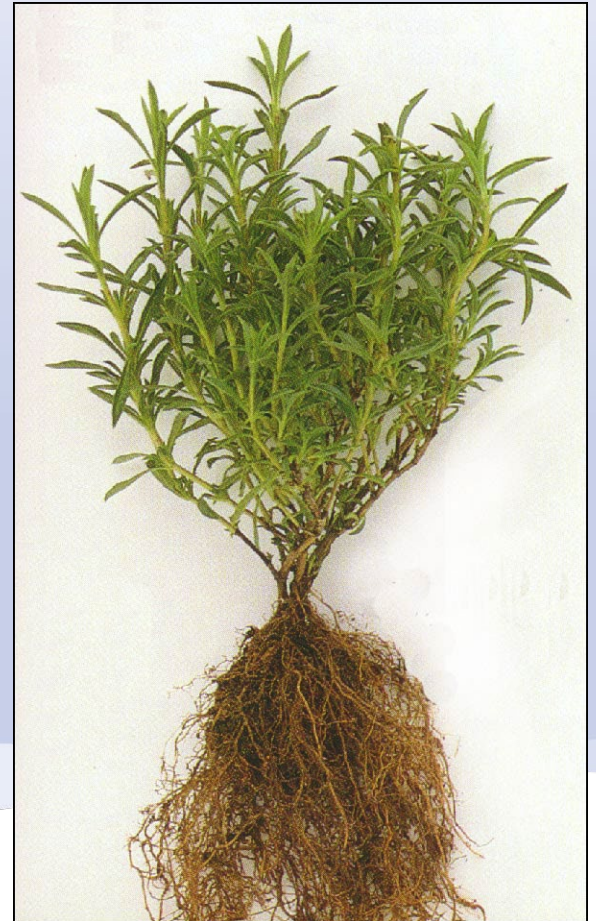
- Annual
- Appearance
  - Erect
  - Many branches
  - Solitary terminal flower, ranging from pale yellow to deep orange
- Propagate - seeds
- Uses
  - Flower petals are used in salads and as garnish



# Winter Savory

## *Satureja montana*

- Perennial
- Appearance
  - Woody compact shrub, 6"-12"
  - Small white or lilac flowers
  - Dark green, lance shaped leaves
- Propagate from cuttings
- Uses
  - Culinary herb for fish and meats
- Note
  - Harvest all winter
  - Summer savory - *Satureja hortensis*





# Parsley

## *Petroselinum crispum*

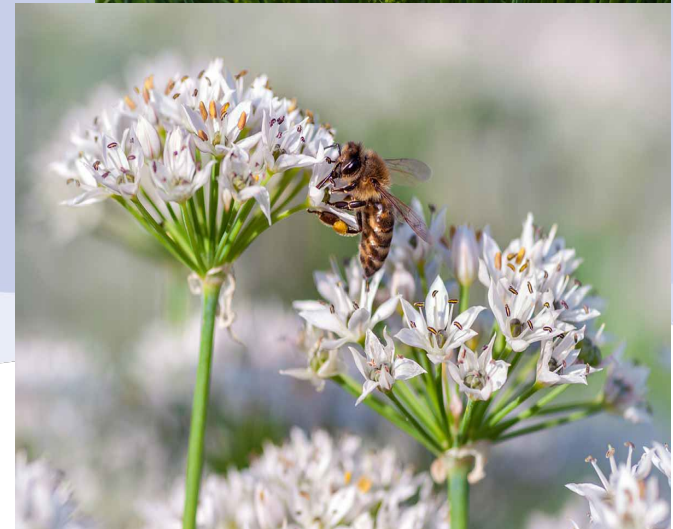
- Biennial
- Appearance
  - Curled to flat green leaves
- Propagate from seed
- Uses
  - Culinary flavoring & decoration;
  - Thought to aid digestion
- Note:
  - Seeds slow to germinate, soak in hot water or freeze overnight; remove flower stalks to extend life in second year.



# Chives

*Allium schoenoprasum/*  
*A. tuberosum*

- Perennial, Appearance
  - Tubular or flat blade-like leaves
  - Purple or white ball-shaped flowers
  - 6" - 2'
- Propagate
  - seeds or division
- Uses:
  - Culinary: flowers for garnish, vinegars
  - Leaves & purple flowers used for dyes
- Note:
  - Chives are excellent ornamental plants



# Garlic

## *Allium sativum*

- Annual
- Appearance
  - Flat bladelike leaves
  - Purple or white flowers
  - 18" - 2'
- Propagate - cloves
- Uses:
  - Culinary: flowers for garnish, vinegars
- Notes
  - Many cultivars
  - Valuable companion plant
  - Cut off or bend back flower stalks as they form

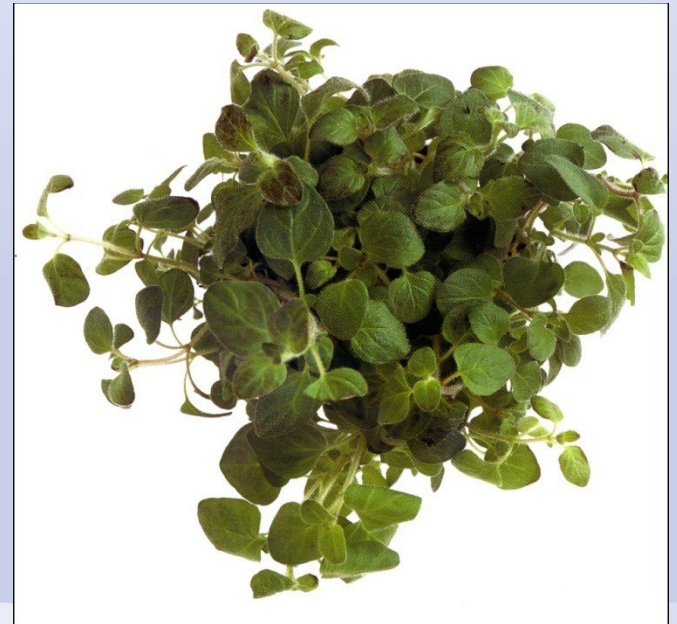




# Oregano/Marjoram

## *Origanum vulgare/marjorana*

- Perennial
- Appearance
  - Green, golden colors with pink white , purple flowers
  - 6" - 3'
- Propagate by division or cuttings (hybridize readily)
- Uses
  - Attracts bees & butterflies
  - Overall flavoring
  - Leaves dry well
- Notes
  - Oregano hardier and more flavorful than marjoram
  - Excellent ornamental plants



# Basil

## *Ocimum basilicum*

- Annual
- Appearance
  - 6" - 2'
  - Green, purple leaves
  - White, pink, lavender flowers
- Propagate from seed or cuttings
- Uses
  - Culinary: pesto, herbal vinegars, overall flavoring
- Notes
  - Works well in containers
  - Frost sensitive
  - Many varieties: "Purple," "Lemon," "Thai," etc.



# Resources

- Sacramento Master Gardeners:  
<http://sacmg.ucanr.edu>
- Oregon State Extension Service:  
<https://extension.oregonstate.edu/gardening>
- Rose Loveall, Morningsun Herb Farm Videos:  
[www.morningsunherbfarm.com](http://www.morningsunherbfarm.com)
- The Kitchen Herb Garden, Rosiland Creasy, Tuttle Publishing
- Edible Landscaping, Rosiland Creasy, Sierra Club Books



# More Resources

- Sacramento Digs Gardening Blog:  
<https://sacdigsgardening.californialocal.com>
- The Edible Flower Garden, Rosiland Creasy,  
Periplus Editions

# Bon appetit



# Thank you!

- Thank you to the Cameron Park Community Center for supporting our programming today.
- Visit our UC Master Gardeners of El Dorado County website!
  - Upcoming class and events
  - Office hours and contact information
  - Sherwood Demo Garden hours and information
  - Gardening resources
- Please keep an eye out for an emailed evaluation from the statewide UC Master Gardeners office and let us know what you've learned!



- Follow us:      



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