



## Herb Description, Culture, Harvesting, and Use

### **Anise** (*Pimpinella anisum*)

#### **Description**

Anise is a dainty annual that grows from 1 to 2 feet high. It has finely cut, serrated leaves and very small, whitish flowers in flat clusters. The leaves and seeds have a warm, sweet taste that suggests licorice.

#### **Culture**

Anise grows rapidly from seed. Plant after all danger of frost has passed. If planted in rows, thin to 6 to 8 inches apart in rows 2 feet apart.

#### **Harvesting**

The green leaves can be cut whenever plants are large enough. Gather seeds about 1 month after flowers bloom.

#### **Use**

Anise leaves can be used in salads and as a garnish. Use the seeds to flavor confections such as cakes and cookies. Oil from anise seed is used in medicine.



---

### **Basil (Sweet)** (*Ocimum basilicum*)

#### **Description**

Basil is an attractive annual, about 18 inches tall with light-green, fairly broad leaves. The flowers are small, white, and appear in spikes. There are several species of cultivated basil, one having purple leaves.

#### **Culture**

Basil grows easily from seed planted after all danger of frost has passed. Pinch stems to promote bushy, compact growth. Avoid lush growth as it may reduce the flavor.

#### **Harvesting**

Green leaves can be picked about 6 weeks following planting. It is best to cut leaves for drying just before flowers open.

#### **Use**

Spicy-scented basil leaves are one of the most popular of all herbs used in cooking. Cooks favor basil for tomato dishes in either fresh or dried form.



## **Borage** (*Borago officinalis*)

### **Description**

Borage is a decorative annual with coarse, hairy leaves and stems and beautiful sky-blue flowers in a star shape. The plant grows about 2 to 3 feet tall.

### **Culture**

Borage is easily grown from seed and will sow itself. This plant does best in dry, sunny places. Although it is difficult to transplant, you can stretch out the harvest by sowing three times at 4-week intervals.

### **Harvesting**

Pick blossoms as they open. Use leaves fresh anytime; they are seldom dried.

### **Use**

Sprays of borage flowers and leaves are used to give a cool, cucumber-like flavor to summer drinks. Bees are attracted to the borage plant.



---

## **Caraway** (*Carum carvi*)

### **Description**

Caraway is a biennial plant that grows about 30 inches tall. The flowers appear in flat, white clusters and, like the finely cut leaves, resemble those of carrots.

### **Culture**

Caraway can be easily raised from seed. Usually, plants do not bear seed the first year they are planted, but if planted in the fall, they will bear seed the following year. This herb is not easily transplanted. If sown in rows, thin to 8 to 12 inches apart in rows 3 feet apart. Protect roots with mulch in winter.

### **Harvesting**

Seeds can be picked when ripe, about a month after flowering, when they are grayish-brown in color.

### **Use**

Caraway seeds have a warm, aromatic odor and flavor and are popular in cooking. The oil of caraway seeds is an important ingredient in liqueurs. Use in Hungarian-type dishes, coleslaw, cheese spreads, meat stews, and fish casseroles.



---

**Catnip** (*Nepeta cataria*)

**Description**

Catnip is a hardy perennial plant that grows 3 to 4 feet tall. The heart-shaped leaves are green above and gray below. The plant has purple flowers.

**Culture**

Catnip is a hardy plant that will grow in sun or shade. It can be grown from seed or propagated by division. When young, the plants are decorative. As they grow older, however, they become scraggly. It's best to plant catnip as a background plant.



**Harvesting**

Cut and dry the mature leafy tops and leaves.

**Use**

Catnip leaves are used for tea and seasoning and also are attractive to cats.

---

**Chervil** (*Anthriscus cerefolium*)

**Description**

Chervil is an annual plant that grows up to 2 feet tall. It's lacy leaves resemble parsley but are a lighter shade of green. The flat heads have delicate white flowers.

**Culture**

Chervil can be raised from seed sown in the garden in early spring. Seedlings are difficult to transplant. Thin plants 3 to 4 inches apart. For denser foliage, cut the flower stems before they bloom.



**Harvesting**

Pick leaves just before the buds break. Cut and dry the green, tender leaves.

**Use**

Chervil leaves are used much like parsley - in soups, salads, sauces, egg dishes, and cheese soufflés.

---

**Chives** (*Allium schoenoprasum*)

**Description**

Chives are small, dainty, onion-like plants that grow in clumps reaching about 10 inches in height. They are a hardy perennial with decorative, light purple flowers.

**Culture**

Chives demand little care other than dividing when they become overcrowded. They are easily propagated by division or from seed and make attractive border plants.

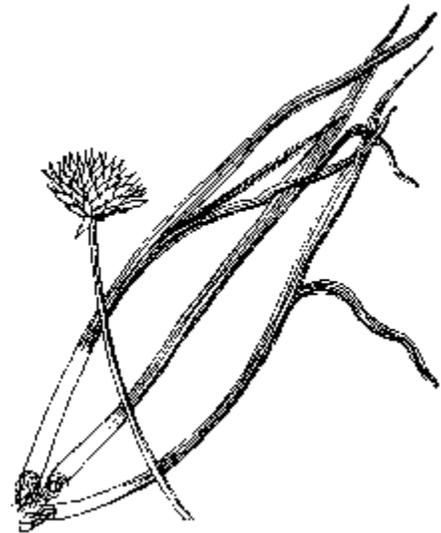
**Harvesting**

Cut fresh leaves for use as they grow.

**Use**

Chives are used to impart a delicious, subtle, onion-like flavor to foods.

---



**Coriander** (*Coriandrum sativum*)

**Description**

Coriander is a dainty annual plant that grows about 2 feet tall. It has finely divided leaves that are both strong-smelling and ill-tasting. Small white or purplish-tinged flowers appear in small, flat heads.

**Culture**

Coriander is easily grown from seed sown in the garden in spring. This plant does well in any good garden soil. Thin plants 7 to 10 inches apart.

**Harvesting**

Harvest plants when 6 inches high or pick leaves sparingly when plants are 4 to 6 inches tall. Gather seeds as they ripen in mid-summer.

**Use**

Coriander seeds, round and about one-eighth of an inch in diameter, have a delicious perfumed taste and odor and are used as a condiment in confections.

---



## **Dill** (*Anethum graveolens*)

### **Description**

Dill, a popular annual, has bluish-green stems that contrast with finely divided, yellow-green, plume-like leaves and yellowish flowers. Dill grows about 2 to 3 feet high.

### **Culture**

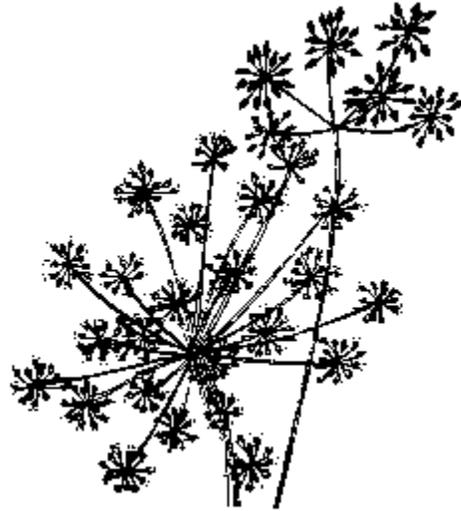
Dill is easily grown from seed sown in the garden in spring after all danger of frost has passed. Sow the seed where you want it to grow as it is difficult to transplant. Stake tall plants.

### **Harvesting**

For best results, pick leaves just as flowers open. Pick seeds when they are flat and brown.

### **Use**

Both the leaves and seeds of dill are popular for flavoring pickles, sauerkraut, and beet dishes. It can be combined with garlic and pepper to produce a highly flavored Mediterranean or East European pork roast (often cooked over a spit outdoors). The seeds yield a fragrant oil.



---

## **Fennel (Florence)** (*Foeniculum dulce*)

### **Description**

Fennel is a perennial (but usually grown as an annual) that grows to about 3 to 4 feet tall. The leaves are finely divided into thread-like segments and are light green.

### **Culture**

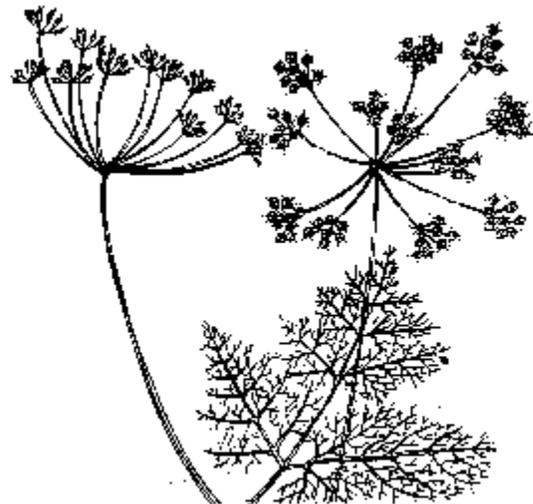
Fennel grows easily from seed planted in the garden in spring. Sow in full sun. Space rows 3 feet apart. Thin plants 10 to 12 inches apart and stake when 18 inches tall to protect from wind.

### **Harvesting**

Pick seeds when ripe. The best stems for eating are the tender flower stalks just before they blossom.

### **Use**

Fennel seeds are used as a condiment. The leaves have an anise-like flavor and the stems can be eaten like celery. Seeds can be used in cheese spreads and vegetable dishes.



---

**Horehound** (*Marrubium vulgare*)**Description**

Horehound is a somewhat coarse perennial plant that is covered with a whitish down. The leaves are crinkled and tend to turn downward.

**Culture**

Horehound grows well in light soil and withstands full sun and intense heat. It is a hardy plant but needs protection where winters are very cold. Horehound can be propagated from seed, cuttings, or by division. Because of its weedy growth habits, it is best to place this plant in the background.

**Harvesting**

Leaves and small stems can be cut in May before plants bloom.

**Use**

Horehound is the source of the familiar old-fashioned horehound candy.

---

**Hyssop** (*Hyssopus officinalis*)**Description**

Hyssop is a hardy perennial that grows no more than 2 feet tall. It has woody stems, small pointed leaves, and spikes of small purple flowers. There also are forms with pink or white flowers. If kept clipped, it makes a good border or small hedge.

**Culture**

Hyssop will grow in rather poor soil and is easily propagated from seed. When it is established, it is a quite hardy plant.

**Harvesting**

Use the youngest leaves and stems as needed.

**Use**

Hyssop's pungent leaves are used to flavor liqueurs and sometimes are used as a condiment. Oil obtained from the leaves is used in making perfume.



**Lavender** (*Lavandula vera*)

**Description**

Lavender is a many-branched, somewhat woody, perennial plant growing 1 to 3 feet tall. The narrow leaves are about 2 inches long and have a pleasing gray-green color. The small lavender flowers are borne on long-stemmed, slender spikes.



**Culture**

Lavender grows best in rocky, dry, sunny places with an abundant amount of lime in the soil. It can be propagated by seed or cuttings. If winters are severe, the plant needs protected.

**Harvesting**

Cut whole flower spikes when the first flowers begin to open, and dry.

**Use**

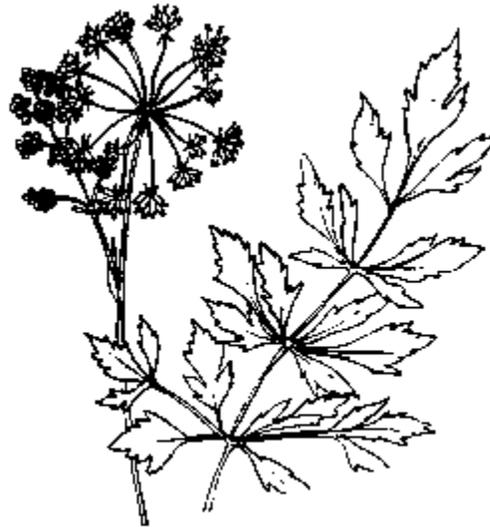
Lavender is one of the most famous of all herbs for the fragrance of its dried flowers and the oil distilled from them. It is used most often in sachets and perfumes.

---

**Lovage** (*Levisticum*

**Description**

large, rich green celery. The leaves are celery.



*officinale*)

Lovage is a hardy perennial with leaves that resemble those of stronger tasting, but sweeter than

**Culture**

moist soil and can be late summer.

Lovage does best in a rich, fairly propagated from seed planted in

**Harvesting**

at any time.

Use the leaves fresh, or dry them

**Use**

give a celery flavor to soups and salads. Blanch stem bases before eating.

---

The leaves and stems of lovage

## **Marjoram (Sweet)** (*Marorana hortensis*)

### **Description**

Sweet marjoram, usually grown as an annual, is one of the most fragrant and popular of all herbs. Its growth habit is low and spreading, and it reaches a height of about 8 to 12 inches. It has small, oval, gray-green leaves that are velvety to the touch.

### **Culture**

This plant can be easily grown from seed or cuttings. In colder climates, it is best treated as an annual or kept overwinter as a pot plant. Its color makes it an attractive border plant.

### **Harvesting**

Sweet marjoram leaves can be used anytime. Cut the leafy stems at flowering and dry for future use.

### **Use**

Sweet marjoram leaves, fresh or dried, can be used as a flavoring in cooking. The oil derived from the leaves is used in making perfume.



---

## **Oregano (Wild marjoram)** (*Origanum vulgare*)

### **Description**

Oregano, also called "wild marjoram," is a hardy perennial that has sprawling stems which can grow to 2 feet tall. This plant is much coarser than sweet marjoram and smells more like thyme. It has small pink or white flowers.

### **Culture**

Oregano grows well in poor soil and can be propagated by seed or division. Thin plants 10 to 12 inches apart. Stimulate foliage by cutting back flowers. Replant when plants become woody in 3 to 4 years.

### **Harvesting**

Use fresh leaves as needed. Preserve leaves by drying.

### **Use**

Oregano leaves are used extensively as a flavoring on pizza. Sprinkle leaves over lamb or steak rubbed with lemon juice. Add to other Italian-type sauces.



---

**Parsley** (*Petroselinum crispum*)

**Description**

Parsley is a hardy biennial that is usually treated as an annual. It is popular because of its much-divided, sometimes curly leaves which have a characteristic flavor and smell.

**Culture**

Cut parsley when the leaves are of suitable size. Leaves can be used fresh or dried.

**Use**

Parsley is one of the most familiar of all herbs and is used for both garnishing and flavoring. It is relatively high in vitamins A and C and iron.



---

**Peppermint** (*Mentha piperita*)

**Description**

Peppermint is a perennial plant with spreading rootstalks and many upright stems 2 feet or more in height. Its dark green leaves and reddish-tinged stems have a characteristic warm, spicy scent. Tiny purplish flowers appear in thick terminal spikes 1 to 3 inches long.

**Culture**

Peppermint does best in a rich, moist soil. Propagate by division or cuttings. The plant will grow in sun or shade. It is best to renew beds every 3 to 4 years.

**Harvesting**

The more frequently the sprigs are cut, the better the growth. Use leaves at any time. Leaves to be dried are best taken just as flowers begin to appear.

**Use**

The leaves are used in tea and for other flavoring. Oil from the plant is used in products such as chewing gum, confections, toilet water, soap, and liqueur.

---



## **Rosemary** (*Rosmarinus officinalis*)

### **Description**

Rosemary is a hardy evergreen shrub in areas where winter temperatures stay above 5°F (-15°C). In the Northeast, however, this perennial should be taken indoors and kept as a pot plant during winter. The narrow leaves have a leather-like feel and a spicy, resinous fragrance.

### **Culture**

Rosemary grows best in well-drained, sunny locations in lime-rich soil. It can be propagated by cuttings or grown from seed. Pinch the tips to direct growth.

### **Harvesting**

Use fresh leaves as needed.

### **Use**

Rosemary is a popular flavoring for meats and dressings or as a garnish on large roasts. Oil from leaves is used in medicine.



---

## **Sage** (*Salvia officinalis*)

### **Description**

Sage is a woody, hardy perennial plant with oblong, wooly, gray-green leaves that are lighter underneath and darker on top. Sage grows 2 to 3 feet or more in height and has a tendency to sprawl.

### **Culture**

Start from seed or cuttings. A slow starter, sow seed indoors and transplant. Plant sage where it will receive full sun. Space plants 2 to 2 feet apart. Plants eventually become woody and should be renewed every 3 to 4 years.

### **Harvesting**

Pick the leaves before or at blooming. Cut back the stems after blooming.

### **Use**

This aromatic and slightly bitter herb is noted for its use in stuffings for poultry, rabbit, pork, and baked fish. It also can be used in sausage or meat loaves.



## **Savory (Summer)** (*Satureja hortensis*)

### **Description**

Summer savory is a tender annual that grows up to 18 inches tall. It has small bronze-green leaves and very small white or lavender flowers. The leaves are pungent and spicy.

### **Culture**

Summer savory grows best in a well-worked loamy soil. Seed can be planted in the garden in spring.

### **Harvesting**

Cut leafy tops when the plants are in bud. Hang in an airy, shaded place until crisp and dry.

### **Use**

Summer savory is popular as a condiment with meats and vegetables and is generally considered sweeter than winter savory.



---

## **Savory (Winter)** (*Satureja montana*)

### **Description**

Winter savory has dark green, shiny, pointed leaves much stiffer in texture than summer savory. It is a woody perennial plant growing to 2 feet in height with small white or lavender flowers.

### **Culture**

Winter savory does best in a light, sandy soil. Keep dead wood trimmed out. Propagate by cuttings or raise from seed.

### **Harvesting**

Pick young shoots and leaves at any time. The leaves are almost evergreen but not as pungent in winter. It is best dried for winter use.

### **Use**

Winter savory is a condiment often used as a flavoring in liqueurs. Its taste is not as sweet as summer savory.

---



## **Spearmint** (*Mentha spicata*)

### **Description**

This hardy perennial plant has pointed, slightly crinkled leaves that are a lighter shade of green than peppermint. The whole plant has a sweet characteristic smell.

### **Culture**

Spearmint grows best in a somewhat moist soil and can be propagated by cuttings or division. Renew beds every 3 to 4 years. Growth is enhanced by frequent cuttings.

### **Harvesting**

Pick the fresh leaves and leafy stem tips for use at any time. For drying, it is best to cut leaves just as flowering begins.



### **Use**

Spearmint leaves are used in teas and to flavor cold drinks and make mint sauce. The oil is used in confections.

---

## **Tarragon** (*Artemisia dracunculus*)

### **Description**

Tarragon is an herbaceous perennial that grows to about 2 feet tall. It has multibranched growth with narrow, somewhat twisted, green leaves.

### **Culture**

Tarragon will grow in full sun but seems to do better in semishade. It can be propagated from root cuttings or by division. It needs protection in winter in cold climates. Make new plantings every 3 to 4 years.

### **Harvesting**

It is best to use fresh young leaves and stem tips. Flavor is lost when tarragon is dried.

### **Use**

Tarragon leaves have a distinctive flavor similar to anise and are used in salads, marinades, and sauces. Leaves yield flavor to vinegar when steeped.

---



## **Thyme** (*Thymus vulgaris*)

### **Description**

Thyme is a low-growing, wiry-stemmed perennial that reaches about 6 to 10 inches in height. The stems are stiff and woody and leaves are small, oval, and gray-green in color. The lilac flowers are borne in small clusters and the leaves are very aromatic.

### **Culture**

This plant grows best in light, well-drained soil. Thin plants 8 to 12 inches apart. It is best to renew the plants every few years. Propagate with cuttings, divisions, or by direct seeding. Thyme is an attractive edging plant or a spreading plant among and over rocks.



### **Harvesting**

Cut leafy tops and flower clusters when first blossoms open and dry.

### **Use**

Thyme is widely used as a seasoning. Oil of thyme is used in medicines and perfumes. It goes well in gumbos, bouillabaisse, clam chowder, poultry stuffings, and slow-cooking beef dishes.

## **Woodruff (Sweet)** (*Asperula odorata*)

### **Description**

Sweet woodruff is a low, spreading, perennial plant that forms clumps about 8 inches in height. The slender leaves are borne in starry whorls. The flowers are tiny and white and form in loose clusters. When the plant is crushed, it has a sweet scent similar to freshly mown hay and vanilla.

### **Culture**

Sweet woodruff can be grown as a perennial if winters are not too severe, but it needs winter protection or should be taken indoors in cold climates. It will thrive in semishade and makes an attractive ground cover under taller plants.



### **Harvesting**

Harvest and dry plants in the spring when fragrance is the strongest.

**Use:** Sweet woodruff is most often used in flavoring German May wine and in other drinks.