



Herb Garden Starter Guide & Pet-Safe Reference

— Grow · Harvest · Protect —

This guide belongs to:

Plant Parenthood: Because Every Plant Deserves a Caring Parent

Grow · Harvest · Protect



Pet-Safe Herb Guide

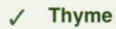
Know which herbs are safe for your furry friends

Pet-Safe Herbs — Grow Freely!



Basil

Ocimum basilicum — safe for dogs & cats



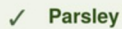
Thyme

Thymus vulgaris — safe, great ground cover



Dill

Anethum graveolens — safe, attracts pollinators



Parsley

Petroselinum crispum — safe, nutrient-rich



Rosemary

Salvia rosmarinus — safe, aromatic



Cilantro

Coriandrum sativum — safe, easy to grow



Sage

Salvia officinalis — safe in small amounts



Lemon Balm

Melissa officinalis — safe, calming for pets

Toxic Herbs — Keep Away from Pets!



Chives

Allium family — causes anemia in dogs & cats



Garlic

Allium sativum — toxic to dogs & cats



Oregano

Origanum vulgare — mildly toxic, GI upset



Tarragon

Artemisia dracunculus — toxic if ingested



Lavender

Lavandula — mildly toxic to dogs & cats



Lemongrass

Cymbopogon — toxic to cats especially



Bay Laurel

Laurus nobilis — vomiting, diarrhea



Pennyroyal

Mentha pulegium — highly toxic — avoid!

My Herbs — Pet Safety Check

HERB NAME	LOCATION	SAFE?	TOXIC?	PRECAUTIONS
		☐	☐	
		☐	☐	
		☐	☐	
		☐	☐	
		☐	☐	
		☐	☐	



Herb Growing Basics

Quick reference for growing healthy herbs

Basil

- Full sun (6-8 hrs)
- Keep moist, not soggy
- Warm, well-drained

Tip: Pinch flowers to extend harvest

Rosemary

- Full sun (6+ hrs)
- Let dry between watering
- Sandy, well-drained

Tip: Drought tolerant once established

Thyme

- Full sun (6+ hrs)
- Light watering
- Sandy, lean soil

Tip: Trim after flowering

Cilantro

- Partial shade
- Keep evenly moist
- Rich, well-drained

Tip: Bolts in heat — succession plant

Parsley

- Partial sun (4-6 hrs)
- Keep evenly moist
- Rich, moist soil

Tip: Biennial — harvest first year

Mint

- Partial shade
- Keep moist
- Rich, moist soil

Tip: CONTAIN IT — spreads aggressively!

Dill

- Full sun (6-8 hrs)
- Moderate watering
- Well-drained

Tip: Attracts butterflies & beneficial insects

Sage

- Full sun (6+ hrs)
- Let dry between watering
- Sandy, well-drained

Tip: Prune to prevent woody growth



Indoor Herb Garden Setup



Grow fresh herbs on your windowsill

Choose the Right Window

South-facing = best light (6+ hrs).
East/west = partial herbs.
North = supplement with grow light.

Container Essentials

Use pots with drainage holes.
6-8 inch pots for most herbs.
Terra cotta breathes well.

Soil Mix

Use well-draining potting mix.
Add perlite for drainage.
Never use garden soil indoors.

Watering Indoors

Check soil moisture with your finger.
Water when top inch is dry.
Don't let pots sit in water.

Feeding Schedule

Feed every 2-4 weeks with diluted liquid fertilizer during growing season.

Pet Safety Tip

Keep toxic herbs on high shelves or in hanging planters.
Cats love to nibble — use pet-safe herbs at floor level!

My Indoor Herb Inventory

HERB NAME	CONTAINER	WINDOW/LIGHT	DATE STARTED	THRIVING?	PET SAFE?
				☐	☐
				☐	☐
				☐	☐
				☐	☐
				☐	☐
				☐	☐
				☐	☐





Outdoor Herb Garden Setup

Plan your herb beds and containers

Garden Bed Name: _____ Location: _____

Sun Exposure: _____ Soil Type: _____

Herb Legend:

Outdoor Herb Tracker

HERB NAME	DATE PLANTED	LOCATION	SUN NEEDS	PET SAFE?	NOTES
_____	_____	_____	_____	☐	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	☐	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	☐	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	☐	_____





Year: _____

Herb Care Tracker

Track watering, feeding & growth



Month: _____

[illegible]

Feeding Log

DATE	HERB NAME	FERTILIZER	AMOUNT	NOTES



Harvesting & Drying Guide



When and how to harvest your herbs

Basil

Pick leaves from top down.
Never remove more than 1/3.
Pinch above leaf nodes to encourage branching.

Rosemary

Snip 4-6 inch stems.
New growth has best flavor.
Can harvest year-round in mild climates.

Thyme

Cut stems before flowering for best flavor.
Leave 2 inches of growth.
Harvest in morning after dew dries.

Cilantro

Harvest outer leaves first.
Cut whole stems at base.
Harvest before bolting for best taste.

Parsley

Cut outer stems at base.
Inner stems keep growing.
Flat-leaf has stronger flavor than curly.

Dill

Snip feathery leaves anytime.
For seeds, let flower heads dry on plant, then collect.

Sage

Pick individual leaves or cut stems.
Best flavor before flowering.
Dry on screen or hang in bundles.

Mint

Cut stems above leaf nodes.
Frequent harvesting keeps plant bushy.
Most flavorful just before flowering.

Drying Methods

- Air Drying:** Tie in small bundles, hang upside down in warm, dry area. 1-2 weeks.
- Oven Drying:** Spread on baking sheet at 170°F. Check every 30 min. 2-4 hours.
- Dehydrator:** Set to 95-115°F. Spread in single layer. 1-4 hours depending on herb.

Culinary Herb Reference

Which herbs go with which foods

Basil

Tomatoes, mozzarella, pasta, pizza
Thai curries, pesto, salads

Cuisine: Italian, Thai

Rosemary

Roasted chicken, lamb, potatoes, bread
olive oil, grilled veggies

Cuisine: Mediterranean

Thyme

Soups, stews, roasted meats, mushrooms
eggs, beans

Cuisine: French, comfort

Cilantro

Salsa, guacamole, tacos, curries
rice, spring rolls, pho

Cuisine: Mexican, Asian

Parsley

Tabbouleh, chimichurri, fish, pasta
salads, garnish

Cuisine: Universal

Dill

Salmon, pickles, potato salad, yogurt sauces
eggs, cucumbers

Cuisine: Scandinavian

Sage

Pork, poultry stuffing, brown butter, pasta
sausage, squash

Cuisine: Italian, American

Mint

Lamb, tabbouleh, cocktails, fruit salads
chocolate, tea, yogurt

Cuisine: Middle Eastern

My Favorite Herb Combinations



Herb Tea & Wellness Guide

Natural remedies from your garden

Chamomile Tea

Calming, sleep aid, digestive support

Steep dried flowers 5-10 min. Add honey.

Peppermint Tea

Digestive aid, headache relief, energy boost

Steep fresh or dried leaves 5-7 min.

Lemon Balm Tea

Stress relief, anxiety, better sleep

Steep fresh leaves 5-10 min. Delicious iced!

Thyme Tea

Cold & cough remedy, immune support

Steep 1 tbsp fresh thyme 10 min. Add lemon.

Rosemary Tea

Memory, circulation, anti-inflammatory

Steep 1 tsp dried rosemary 5 min.

Sage Tea

Sore throat, hot flashes, digestive aid

Steep 1 tbsp fresh sage 5 min. Don't overdo.

Basil Tea

Anti-stress, anti-inflammatory, calming

Steep handful fresh leaves 5-7 min.

Lavender Tea

Relaxation, headaches, sleep aid

Steep 1 tsp dried buds 5 min. Very fragrant.

■ **Note:** These are for HUMAN use only. Many herbal teas are NOT safe for pets. Keep tea ingredients away from animals.

My Tea Journal

DATE	TEA BLEND	PURPOSE	NOTES / TASTE





Companion Planting for Herbs

Which herbs grow well together

Great Herb Companions

Basil + Tomatoes

Basil improves tomato flavor & repels aphids

Dill + Cabbage

Dill attracts wasps that eat cabbage worms

Rosemary + Sage

Both love dry conditions, thrive together

Thyme + Roses

Thyme ground cover deters blackfly

Cilantro + Spinach

Cilantro provides shade for spinach

Parsley + Tomatoes

Parsley attracts beneficial insects

Chives + Carrots

Chives deter carrot fly (but toxic to pets!)

Mint + Cabbage

Mint deters cabbage moths (contain it!)

Keep These Apart!

Basil + Sage

Different water needs — sage likes dry

Dill + Fennel

Cross-pollinate — ruins both flavors

Mint + Everything

Mint will take over — always contain it!

Cilantro + Fennel

Fennel stunts cilantro growth

My Companion Notes





Pet-Safe Herb Pest Control

Natural pest solutions for your herb garden

Pet-Safe Pest Solutions for Herbs

Neem Oil Spray

For: Aphids, whiteflies

■ Dilute per label. Spray in evening. Safe for pets once dry.

Soapy Water

For: Aphids, mealybugs

■ 1 tsp dish soap per quart water. Rinse herbs before eating.

Diatomaceous Earth

For: Slugs, snails, ants

■ Food-grade only. Sprinkle around base. Reapply after rain.

Companion Herbs

For: Various pests

■ Plant basil near tomatoes. Mint deters ants. Dill attracts beneficials.

Hand Picking

For: Caterpillars, beetles

■ Check daily. Drop in soapy water. 100% pet safe!

Garlic Spray

For: Aphids, spider mites

■ Blend garlic + water. Strain & spray. Keep pets away until dry.

Pest Treatment Log

DATE	HERB	PEST	TREATMENT	PET SAFE?	RESOLVED?
				☐	☐
				☐	☐
				☐	☐
				☐	☐
				☐	☐
				☐	☐
				☐	☐





Herb Garden Layout Grid

Sketch your herb garden design

Garden Name: _____

Location: _____

Season: _____

Year: _____



Herb Legend:

_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____





My Herb Journal



Notes, experiments & observations

Date: _____

Herb: _____

Lined area for journaling with horizontal lines and small decorative plant icons.



Seasonal Herb Checklist

Year-round herb garden care

SPRING

- ☐ Start basil & cilantro seeds indoors
- ☐ Transplant rosemary & thyme outdoors
- ☐ Divide mature herb plants
- ☐ Prepare beds with compost
- ☐ Check all herbs for pet safety
- ☐ Begin hardening off seedlings
- ☐ Plant dill & parsley direct sow
- ☐ Set up drip irrigation for herbs

SUMMER

- ☐ Harvest herbs regularly for best growth
- ☐ Water deeply in early morning
- ☐ Succession plant cilantro every 3 weeks
- ☐ Deadhead flowering herbs
- ☐ Watch for bolting in heat
- ☐ Dry or freeze excess harvest
- ☐ Apply pet-safe pest control
- ☐ Make fresh herb butter & oils

AUTUMN

- ☐ Harvest remaining herbs before frost
- ☐ Take rosemary & basil cuttings
- ☐ Bring tender herbs indoors
- ☐ Plant garlic for spring (toxic to pets!)
- ☐ Mulch perennial herbs for winter
- ☐ Dry and store herb harvests
- ☐ Clean up annual herb beds
- ☐ Start windowsill herb garden

WINTER

- ☐ Tend indoor herb garden
- ☐ Order seed catalogs
- ☐ Plan next year's herb layout
- ☐ Review pet-safe herb list
- ☐ Try new herb tea blends
- ☐ Clean and oil garden tools
- ☐ Start herb journal entries
- ☐ Dream of spring basil!