



**LIVING  
PONO  
PROJECT**  
*Growing Futures for All*

# How to Care for Herbs

*A Complete Guide to Growing Fresh Herbs at Home*

*HERB: a plant or plant part valued for its medicinal, savory, or aromatic qualities  
(non-woody stem)*

## Common Herbs to Grow:

<b>Basil</b>	<b>Thyme</b>	<b>Rosemary</b>
<b>Fennel</b>	<b>Cilantro</b>	<b>Mint</b>
<b>Dill</b>	<b>Anise</b>	<b>Curled Chervil</b>
<b>Lavender</b>	<b>Oregano</b>	<b>Sage</b>

Growing herbs is one of the easiest and most rewarding ways to enhance your cooking and connect with the land. Whether you have a large garden or just a sunny windowsill, fresh herbs are within reach. This guide will help you successfully grow and harvest your own herbs year-round.

# Watering

Proper watering is essential for healthy herb growth. Different herbs have different water needs, but these general guidelines will help you keep your herbs thriving.

- Low/medium watering is required for herbs. Most herbs prefer moderate moisture rather than constant wetness.
- Allow soil to dry out slightly in between watering. Overwatering is one of the most common causes of herb plant failure.
- Depending on temperature conditions you should only need to water your herbs 2-3 times a week. Adjust based on weather.
- Keep soil moist and damp. Stick your finger about an inch into the soil to check moisture levels before watering.

**Pro Tip:** Water herbs in the morning when possible. This allows excess moisture to evaporate during the day and prevents fungal diseases.

# Sunlight

Light requirements vary among herbs. Understanding which herbs need full sun versus partial sun will help you place them in the right locations for optimal growth.

## *Herbs That Prefer Partial Sun*

Herbs such as parsley, chives, dill, mint, and coriander prefer partial sun. These herbs can tolerate some shade and may actually benefit from protection from intense afternoon sun, especially in hot climates.

## *Herbs That Prefer Full Sun*

Herbs such as rosemary, basil, sage, thyme, oregano, parsley, and fennel prefer full sun. These Mediterranean herbs thrive in 6-8 hours of direct sunlight daily and develop the strongest flavors when grown in sunny locations.

## *Growing Herbs Indoors*

If growing herbs indoors, keep plants in a window seal or near windows so they can receive sunlight. South-facing windows provide the most light. You can also supplement natural light with grow lights if needed.

**Pro Tip:** Rotate your potted herbs every few days to ensure even growth on all sides. This prevents plants from leaning toward the light source.

# Harvesting & Storage

Knowing when and how to harvest your herbs ensures the best flavor and encourages continued growth throughout the season.

## *When to Harvest*

- Prime harvest time for herbs is in the morning before the sun gets too hot. Essential oils are most concentrated in the morning.
- Avoid harvesting herbs after it flowers unless you plan on harvesting entire plant. Once herbs flower, leaves can become bitter.
- Cut the tops and stop looking leaves of herb before picking. Choose the healthiest, most vibrant leaves.

## *Encouraging Regrowth*

To encourage regrowth, leave a portion of plant that you are cutting from. Never harvest more than one-third of the plant at a time.

## *Storage Methods*

**Refrigerator Storage:** Herbs can be stored in the refrigerator in a sealable plastic bag with damp paper towel, or in a glass of water. Fresh herbs typically last 5-7 days when stored properly.

**Drying Herbs:** Hang them to dry in cool dark ventilated area or use dehydrator. Properly dried herbs maintain their flavor for 6-12 months.

**Pro Tip:** To dry herbs quickly, wash and pat them dry, remove leaves from stems, and spread on a baking sheet. Place in a low oven (150°F) for 2-4 hours. Once crispy, store in airtight jars.

## Additional Growing Tips

### *Container Growing*

Most herbs grow excellently in containers. Use pots with drainage holes and quality potting mix.

### *Fertilizing*

Herbs don't require heavy fertilization. A light application of compost every 4-6 weeks during the growing season is usually sufficient.

### *Pest Management*

Most herbs are naturally pest-resistant due to their aromatic oils. Try companion planting or gentle water sprays before treatments.

### *Pinching and Pruning*

Regular harvesting and pinching back growing tips encourages bushier growth and prevents herbs from becoming leggy.

### *Overwintering*

Some perennial herbs like rosemary, thyme, and sage can be brought indoors during winter. Reduce watering and provide bright light.

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