



Environmental Horticulture Notes

EHN 70

CULINARY HERB PROFILES

Basil – *Ocimum basilicum*

- | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| a. Annual | d. Full sun |
| b. Rich soil | e. Moderate water |
| c. Space 6"; height 8" to 24" | f. Flowers in summer |

Basil is best started from seed sown indoors in late March or early April and moved to the garden after danger of last frost has passed. Seed germinates in 5 to 14 days. Best used fresh. Harvest before flowering. Prune basil to first leaf bud below the flower to encourage further leaf production.

Bay – *Laurus nobilis*

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| a. Evergreen tree | d. Full sun to part shade |
| b. Moderately rich soil | e. Low water |
| c. Space 3'; height 5' to 40' | f. Spring growth period |

Start from cuttings taken in the fall. Takes at least 6 months to develop a root system. Difficult to propagate.

Calendula - *Calendula officinalis*

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| a. Annual | d. Full sun |
| b. Average soil | e. Low water |
| c. Space 12"; height 2' | f. Blooms spring through fall |

Sow seeds directly into garden as soon as ground can be worked, preferably early spring. Germinates in 10 days to 2 weeks. Self-sows freely.

Chamomile - *Matricaria recutita*

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| a. Annual | d. Full sun to partial shade |
| b. Slightly alkaline soil | e. Low water |
| c. Space 1" to 2"; height 1' to 2' | f. Blooms early spring |

Tiny seeds can be mixed with sand to ensure even distribution directly into garden. Self sows freely. Sow early in spring to prevent leggy flowers. Roman Chamomile (*Chamaemelum nobile*) is a perennial that is grown as a ground cover that prefers slightly acid soil. Harvest flowers continuously when petals begin to droop.

Chives - *Allium schoenoprasum*

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| a. Bulb plant | d. Full sun to part shade |
| b. Prefers rich soil | e. Moderate water |
| c. Space 6"; height to 12" | f. Blooms in summer |

Can be started from seed, purchased, or from clump. Clumps should be divided every 3 to 5 years. Best used fresh.

Cilantro – *Coriandrum sativum*

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| a. Annual | d. Partial shade |
| b. Rich soil | e. Moderate water |
| c. Space 8" to 18"; height 10" to 12" | |

Direct seed in warm semi-shady spot. Cut leaves during growing season to produce second harvest. Cilantro will probably go to seed after the second harvest. Cilantro does not tolerate heat above 85° and will bolt.

Dill – *Anethum graveolens*

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|
| a. Biennial | d. Full sun |
| b. Acidic soil | e. Moderate water |
| c. Space 10" to 12"; height 3' to 5' | f. Blooms in summer |

Direct seed into garden. Self sows freely. Difficult to transplant. Fresh leaves should be harvested before flowering. Harvest seeds as seed heads become brown and dry. Good butterfly plant.

Fennel – *Foeniculum vulgare*

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| a. Perennial | d. Full sun |
| b. Average soil | e. Moderate water |
| c. Space 2'; height 4' | f. Blooms July through September |

Direct seed into garden. Keep seeds moist for 2 weeks. Afterward, do not overwater. Seeds can be planted in fall.

Garlic – *Allium sativum*

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| a. Annual | d. Full sun |
| b. Rich, light, alkaline soil | e. Moderate water |
| c. Space 6" | f. Blooms in summer |

Plant bulbs in the ground from early fall to early spring. Dig up bulbs in summer when leaves lose color and die to ground. Tradition says to plant garlic on shortest day of year and harvest on longest day.

Hyssop – *Hyssopus officinalis*

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| a. Perennial | d. Full sun |
| b. Light soil | e. Low water |
| c. Space 2'; height 12" to 24" | f. Blooms in summer |

Easily grown from seed or propagated from spring or fall root division. To harvest, cut stems before flowering. Attracts bees.

Lavender – *Lavandula species*

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| a. Perennial shrub | d. Full sun |
| b. Sandy soil | e. Low water |
| c. Space 1' to 2'; height 2' to 4' | f. Blooms in June |

Lavenders can be grown from seed or cuttings taken in spring or fall. Harvest buds just as flowers are about to open. Prune lavender after flowering. Lightly trim lavender in spring to encourage flower production. There are numerous varieties featuring different flower colors and heights. English varieties (*Lavandula angustifolia*) considered premium scented variety. French hybrid (*Lavandula x intermedia*) varieties such as 'Provence' or 'Superior' do well in our region. Deer resistant.

Lemon balm – *Melissa officinalis*

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------------|
| a. Perennial | d. Full sun to partial shade |
| b. Average soil | e. Blooms summer to frost |
| c. Space 2'; height 2' | |

Grows easily from seed sown in spring or early fall. Harvest before plant blooms. Best used fresh. Delicate lemon scent.

Lemon Verbena – *Aloysia triphylla*

- | | | | |
|----|---------------------|----|------------------|
| a. | Deciduous shrub | d. | Full sun |
| b. | Rich soil | e. | Moderate water |
| c. | Space 3'; height 4' | f. | Blooms in summer |

Propagated from stem cuttings pencil-sized or smaller. Mid and late summer stems take best. Harvest sprigs of leaves all year long. Cut back in mid summer. Fragrant shrub.

Lovage – *Levisticum officinale*

- | | | | |
|----|---------------------|----|------------------|
| a. | Perennial | d. | Full sun |
| b. | Rich soil | e. | Moderate water |
| c. | Space 3'; height 5' | f. | Blooms in summer |

Sow seeds in fall or spring. Mature plants can be divided in the spring. Requires little care. Deadhead to encourage growth. Harvest young leaves and stalks often.

Marjoram – *Origanum marginata*

- | | | | |
|----|------------------------------|----|------------------|
| a. | Perennial | d. | Full sun |
| b. | Average soil | e. | Low water |
| c. | Space 12"; height 12" to 18" | f. | Blooms in summer |

Sow seeds in spring. Cut plant 6 to 8 inches from the ground before first flowering to encourage second harvest.

Mints - *Mentha species*

- | | | | |
|----|------------------------|----|-----------------------|
| a. | Perennial | d. | Moderate water |
| b. | Rich soil | e. | Blooms in July/August |
| c. | Full sun to part shade | | |

Propagate by stem cuttings or root division. Mint is invasive and best grown in containers. Twenty true species. There are many varieties with different scents such as apple, orange, and spearmint. Harvest new growth for best flavor.

Nasturtium – *Tropaeolum majus*

- | | | | |
|----|-----------------------|----|------------------------|
| a. | Annual | d. | Full sun to part shade |
| b. | Average soil | e. | Low water |
| c. | Space and height vary | f. | Blooms in summer |

Sow seed in spring. Plants flower best in poor soil. Does not transplant well. Will produce fewer flowers if grown in shade.

Oregano – *Origanum vulgare*

- | | | | |
|----|---------------------|----|------------------|
| a. | Perennial | d. | Full sun |
| b. | Alkaline soil | e. | Low water |
| c. | Space 1'; height 2' | f. | Blooms in summer |

Propagated from seeds, stem cuttings, or root division. Seeds germinate slowly. Harvest as plant begins to bloom.

Parsley - *Petroselinum crispum*

- | | | | |
|----|---------------------------|----|------------------------|
| a. | Annual | d. | Full sun to part shade |
| b. | Rich soil | e. | Moderate water |
| c. | Space 1'; height 1' to 2' | f. | Blooms in early summer |

Sow seeds in spring and fall to ensure continued harvest. Seeds take 3 to 6 weeks to germinate. Harvest leaves when they reach a height of about 8 inches and at anytime thereafter. Loses flavor when dried.

Rosemary - *Rosmarinus officinalis*

- | | | | |
|----|---------------------------|----|------------------------|
| a. | Evergreen shrub | d. | Full sun to part shade |
| b. | Rich to average soil | e. | Low water |
| c. | Space 2'; height 2' to 6' | f. | Blooms in early summer |

Propagate prostrate rosemary by root division. Propagate upright varieties from stem cuttings in the spring. If leaf tips droop when temperatures rise, water immediately. "Tuscan blue" is an upright, branching shrub variety. Harvest throughout the year by cutting 4 inch pieces from top.

Salad Burnet – *Poterium sanguisorba*

- | | | | |
|----|---------------------|----|------------------------|
| a. | Perennial | d. | Full sun to part shade |
| b. | Average soil | e. | Low water |
| c. | Space 1'; height 3' | f. | Blooms in summer |

Root division in spring. Self sows freely. Very little maintenance required. Bushy plant.

Sage – *Salvia officinalis*

- | | | | |
|----|---------------------|----|------------------|
| a. | Perennial | d. | Full sun |
| b. | Rich, sandy soil | e. | Low water |
| c. | Space 1'; height 2' | f. | Blooms in summer |

Excellent drainage is required to prevent root rot. Can be propagated by seeds, cuttings, layering, or root division of older plants. After second year, plant needs to be trimmed in spring to avoid center becoming woody. Powerful distinctive fragrance. Tricolor sage is a favorite for color in the herb garden. Berrgarten sage is preferred variety. Harvest by snipping leaves.

Scented Geranium – *Pelargonium species*

- | | | | |
|----|----------------------|----|------------------|
| a. | Perennial | d. | Full sun |
| b. | Rich, humus soil | e. | Low water |
| c. | Space 2'; height 2', | f. | Blooms in summer |

Take cuttings from non-flowering shoots in summer. Not very frost hardy. Harvest young leaves. Dries brown. Best used fresh. There are numerous varieties which have wonderful scents and flowers. *Pelargonium crispum* is a lemon scented geranium. *Pelargonium* cultivar 'Attar of Rose' has pungent rose scent. *Pelargonium x nervosum* 'Lime' geranium has orchid like flower and strong lime scent.

Tarragon - *Artemisia dracunculus*

- | | | | |
|----|---------------------|----|------------------------|
| a. | Perennial | d. | Full sun to part shade |
| b. | Rich, sandy soil | e. | Moderate water |
| c. | Space 1'; height 8" | | |

Propagated by root division in spring. Leaves bruise easily. Transplant 1 inch sections of root tips with bud. Handle with care during harvest. Best used fresh.

Thyme – *Thymus species*

- | | | | |
|----|---------------------|----|------------------------|
| a. | Evergreen perennial | d. | Full sun to part shade |
| b. | Rich soil | e. | Low water |
| c. | Space 1'; height 1' | | |

Propagate by root division every 3 to 4 years. Good ground cover or border plant. Harvest leaves before blossoms open. Second harvest may weaken some varieties.