**Environmental Horticulture Notes**

**LANDSCAPING WITH HERBS**

**Definition of an herb:** The word “herb” comes from the Latin word “herba”, which means grass or green plant. Most herbs are herbaceous, plants without a permanent woody stem. However, the broad term of “herb” often includes flowers, vegetables, grasses, and even trees.

**BASIC LANDSCAPING GUIDELINES TO CONSIDER PRIOR TO PLANTING**

- Plan according to your lifestyle. Take into consideration the amount of time you have to devote to your garden, how you want to use your yard – children playing, entertaining, or just what.
- Consider the type of garden you desire: formal, informal, perennial, rock, knot garden, container, woodland setting, erosion control, as companion to vegetables, or something else.
- Consider whether the plant will attract bees (if so, don’t plant near a pool or play yard), and whether the garden will harmonize with your home’s architecture.
- Consider shape and use of plants. Some herbs can be used as hedges or fencing. Consider your garden type – raised beds, pathways, Japanese gardens, formal gardens, rock gardens, etc.
- There are many varieties of common herbs. For example, there are 20 true mint species and over 500 sage species.

**DEVELOP A LANDSCAPE PLAN ON PAPER AND CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING**

- Tree roots – area of root space a tree requires versus where herbs are located.
- Irrigation systems – different watering requirements of different herbs.
- Annuals, perennials – dormancy period of perennials and replanting of annuals.
- Height and width of plants – avoid hidden plants and realize growth size of mature plants.
- Soil and water preferred by plant – some herbs require sandy soil and others a rich, moist soil.
- Hours of sunlight – most herbs need 5 to 8 hours minimum.
- Soil drainage – some herbs require a drier soil and others a moist soil.
- Colors and styles you wish to create.

**INDOOR HERB GARDENING**

- Herbs indoors prefer a south facing window and a minimum 5 hours of sunlight.
- Florescent lights can be 6 inches above the plants and must be on for 14 to 16 hours a day.
- Lighting systems or grow lights are optional.
- Good drainage is required. Use appropriate pot size for each individual plant. Rotate indoor herb plants with plants in containers outdoors. Monitor for insects before returning plants to indoor area.

**GATHERING AND USING HERBS**

Harvest each herb according to their specific requirements for optimal flavor. Best harvest times are in the late morning after dew is gone. This ensures that the essential oils of the plant are at the optimal level and the scent is maintained. Herbs do not particularly need to be cleaned once harvested. If insects or dirt is present on the herbs, you can rinse the herbs under the tap. Herbs can also be soaked in a container of cool water and this water changed until there is no sign of dirt or insects. Remove distorted or chewed leaves. Use herbs fresh or dried. Pat herbs dry and hang in a non-ventilated space upside down to dry. Dry herbs in small bundles. Herb drying racks or baskets can be used to dry herbs. It is crucial to provide air circulation for herbs to dry and maintain their color. Some herbs turn brown when not dried properly. Be particularly careful with peppermint and lemon balm. These herbs will turn brown if exposed to moisture during the drying process.

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**Notes**

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Avoid using pesticides in your garden by following proper Integrated Pest Management strategies. For more information about Integrated Pest Management, call the UCCE Sacramento County Master Gardener office: 916-876-5338.

**SHADE**
- Sweet woodruff
- Mints
- Violets

**PARTIAL SHADE**
- Angelica
- Bee balm
- Catnip
- Chamomile
- Chervil
- Chives
- Costmary
- Feverfew
- Geraniums
- Lemon balm
- Lovage
- Parsley
- Bay
- Sweet cicely
- Tarragon
- Yarrow

**DROUGHT TOLERANT**
- Artemesia
- Germander
- Horehound
- Lambs ear
- Lavender
- Old roses
- Rosemary
- Sage
- Santolina
- Thyme
- Yarrow

**FRAGRANT**
- Bee balm
- Costmary
- Lavender
- Lemon balm

**FRAGRANT (cont.)**
- Lemon thyme
- Marjoram
- Mints
- Oregano
- Old roses
- Rosemary
- Scented geraniums

**TEA GARDEN**
- Bee balm
- Borage
- Catnip
- Chamomile
- Costmary
- Lemon balm
- Lemon thyme
- Mints
- Parsley
- Rosemary
- Sage

**GRAY AND SILVER GARDEN**
- Artemesia
- Catmint
- Germander
- Gray santolina
- Horehound
- Lambs ear
- Lavender
- Sage
- Silver thyme
- Wormwood
- Yarrow

**FLOWERS**
- Bee balm
- Calendula
- Chamomile
- Feverfew
- Lavender
- Old roses
- Sage
- Thyme

**HERBS FOR BEEKEEPERS**
- Basil
- Bee balm
- Borage
- Catnip
- Chamomile
- Chicory
- Fennel
- Germander
- Hyssop
- Lavender
- Lemon balm
- Marjoram
- Rosemary
- Sage
- Savory
- Thyme

**HANGING BASKETS**
- Catnip
- Marjoram
- Mints
- Rosemary
- Thyme

**INDOOR PLANTS**
- Aloe vera
- Basil
- Catnip
- Chives, garlic chives
- Lavender
- Lemon balm
- Marjoram
- Oregano
- Parsley
- Rosemary
- Sage
- Scented-leaf geraniums
- Winter savory
- Thyme

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