



# *Creating* *Herb* Gardens

SHORT COURSE

# HOW TO WORK THROUGH THIS COURSE

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Over the following pages, you will move through a logical, self-paced learning experience that can enlighten and educate you.

It is important from the outset to understand that learning about something is not the same as just reading about it. Learning implies a permanent change in what you know and can do.

Anyone can read a book and understand it; but for most people the detail of what you read is largely forgotten.

Reading something once only puts information into short-term memory. It is soon lost if you don't 'work' on it. Studying the same information takes longer, but by thinking about it and processing it you can transfer that information to long-term memory. This way, you will enhance your ability to recall and apply that information for years to come. If you take your time to work through the lessons that follow, you will learn.

## Read, Reflect, Research, Revise

Throughout the following pages, you will find not only things to read about, but also things to do:

1. Throughout each lesson, there are suggestions of things to do under the headings "Learn More". These are all sorts of ideas about things you can do in order to explore the subject further.
2. At the end of each lesson, click on the link that says "Click Here to Access your Lesson Review Questions". You will need to be online and logged into the student room to access these. Your answers are evaluated in real time and you will be given a score upon completion. You can repeat these if you need to.

Undertaking these tasks will involve reflection, research and revision of the topics you read about. By repeatedly encountering each topic in different ways, your perspective on each subject will broaden, and the commitment of information to longer term memory will strengthen.

You don't need to undertake all of the suggested tasks if you don't want to; but we strongly recommend that you do some in each lesson, and that you take all of the Lesson Review Questions.

The more time you spend doing these things, the stronger your learning will be.

## Completing the Course

After completing all the lessons you will be presented with a final assessment which can also be undertaken online.

Do not attempt to do this until you have worked through all the lessons, and feel like you have learnt the subject well.

Upon finishing this final assessment you will immediately see your final results, and you can save a pdf copy of those results as a "Certificate of Completion".

## Welcome Audio

Click the button below to listen to the welcome audio for this course. This feature is supported by most computers and some mobile devices.



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## LESSON 1 GROWING HERBS

*Herbs are plants which are grown because of the characteristics derived from the oils or other chemical components found in their tissues. Herbs come in all shapes and sizes, from bulbs and perennials to woody trees and shrubs.*

Herbs can be described as any plant whose roots, bark, stems, leaves, seeds or flowers are used for specific purposes. Many are scented plants, and all provide something which is useful. For example, there are herbs used in

cooking, cosmetics, perfumes, crafts, pest control, or medicinally. Herbs are often grown by themselves in a dedicated herb garden, though they can also be mixed in with other plants throughout the garden.



Grow together different herbs with similar vigour but varied foliage colour and texture

Many people grow herbs in containers, as tub plants or baskets, kept on a patio, in a window box, or even as indoor plants. Whatever way you choose, growing herbs will add a new and exciting dimension to your gardening. Even old hands at herb gardening continue to be amazed by the diversity of herb varieties and their uses.

### Growing Healthy Herbs

To get the most out of your herbs it is important that you keep your plants in a healthy state. Herbs are generally very hardy and highly adaptable plants however the correct care will improve the lifespan and general condition of even the hardiest plants.

### Suggested Tasks: ▼

*Throughout this course, you will be provided with suggested tasks and reading to aid your understanding. These will appear in the right hand column.*

*Remember: these tasks are optional. The more you complete, the more you will learn. In order to complete the course in 20 hours you will need to manage your time well. We suggest you spend about 10 minutes on each task you attempt, and no more than 20 minutes.*



### Where Can They Be Grown?

Herbs are quite versatile and can be grown in a variety of situations, which include:

- Formal herb gardens.
- Informal herb beds in the garden such as in many cottage gardens.
- In containers such as baskets, herb pots, tubs and window boxes.
- Amongst other plants, such as in a vegie garden as companion plants for insect control, or as an additional crop.

### Getting Started

You can begin a herb garden from seeds, cuttings, purchased plants or plants obtained from friends, etc. If you choose to buy plants, tube stock is generally the most economical means of purchase because most herbs grow quickly. However, large pots are usually better for the slower growing woody herbs such as rosemary, lavender and bay trees.

When purchasing plants, you should look for the following features as an indication of whether it is a healthy plant you are looking at:

- Does the plant have any damage to its foliage?

- Is there any discoloration of the root tips?
- Is the plant pot bound?
- Are the growing tips lush and healthy looking?
- Is the colour of the foliage healthy looking or is it mottled or discoloured?
- Are there signs of pests or disease, including under the leaves?
- Is the plant stem vigorous and not straggly?

It is very important to remember that if you want healthy plants you should only purchase good quality plants. Don't compromise, it works out cheaper in the long run!



Lavender grown in informal beds separated by pavers

## Propagation

Most herbs are relatively easy to propagate. Many grow well from seed, and seed production is still one of the most common methods of propagation. However, cuttings and division are the preferred methods of propagation because they enable the production of plants with identical characteristics to the parent plants.



Mint, thyme and other herbs can propagate by division

## Seed Propagation

To propagate plants by seed, consider the health of the seed, freshness of the seed, and choosing the right season for sowing. Also, follow recommended procedures and keep seeds and seedlings moist but not wet.

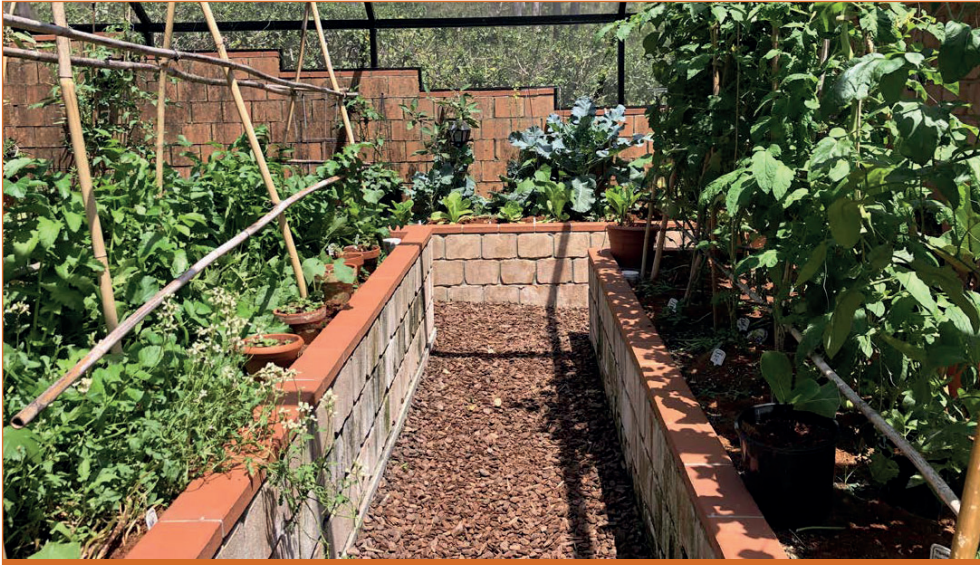
## LEARN MORE >>>

### Suggested Tasks

Make a list of the herbs you think most people would like to grow and use in their herb garden. Spend 15 minutes or so researching them to find out what each of the herbs prefer in the way of soil, sun, water, fertiliser and so on. This should tell you which herbs are best grown together and which might need a separate spot.

Take notes and keep this for your future reference.





Raised beds for herbs and vegetables

### The Basic Steps

1. Use equipment that is clean and free of any infectious diseases. If you are reusing old materials, sterilize them.
2. Sow seeds in a tray or pot filled to just below the rim with good quality seed raising mixture that has been specially blended to improve germination. This should be lightly moistened and allowed to drain freely.

Use a dibble to make small holes just deep and big enough for single seeds; or make a shallow furrow to sow seeds in a single line; or spread the seed evenly over the mix.

Ensure that the seeds are not too close to one another otherwise disease may be increased and separation of the seedlings may be difficult.

3. Cover seeds with a fine layer of mixture to improve germination. As a general rule, seeds are covered to about twice their diameter with seed raising mix (alternatively, you could have made the holes and depressions this depth originally).

Gently apply pressure to improve seed/mix contact to speed up germination. Gently water in.

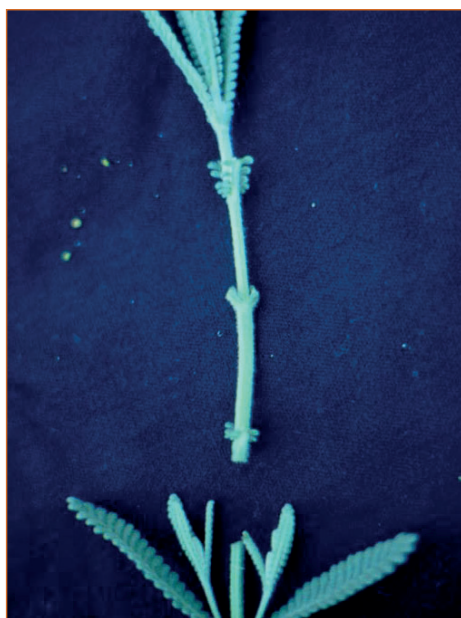
4. Position the seed tray or pot in a sheltered position where it will receive some light but not full sun. Deep shade should be avoided. A greenhouse or cold frame is often used, particularly in cooler climates.

Ensure seed tray is continually watered.

As seedlings appear continue watering and rotate tray if plants are bending due to inadequate light supply (even better, move plants to a sunnier position).

5. As seedlings continue to grow consider providing a weak soluble fertiliser to assist plant development. When they are past the two-leaf stage (i.e. when more leaves start to develop) you can transplant the seedlings into their own growing on pots or directly into the ground (depending on the variety).

Provide adequate moisture to promote growth and to minimise any shock during the transplanting process.



Lavender dentata cutting

## Cutting Propagation

Cuttings can be classified two different ways:

1. According to the time of year the cutting is taken (or the stage of growth the plant is at when it is taken):

- **A softwood cutting** is one taken in spring when the young growth on the plant is soft tissue.
- **A hardwood cutting** taken in winter using the stem i.e. old growth. Common hardwood cuttings include tip growth from conifers or sections of stem from deciduous plants.
- **A semihardwood cutting** is usually taken late summer or early autumn, as recent spring growth is in the process of hardening.
- **Herbaceous cuttings** which are a leafy stem cutting taken from a soft wooded (succulent growing) plants can be taken at virtually any time of the year.

2. According to the part of the plant which is used (e.g. a leaf cutting is a cutting made from just a leaf, or part of a leaf).

- **Stem cuttings:** A section of stem, usually (but not always) with some leaves left on the top but lower leaves removed. There should be a node (the point at which a bud emerges) at the bottom of the cutting and another node at the top of the cutting. There may be one, or several nodes in between.
- **Tip cuttings:** Stem cutting taken from the growing tip of a plant.
- **Heel cuttings:** A stem cutting of one-year-old wood which has attached to the base, a small section of two-year-old wood. Normally prepared by tearing side shoots from a small branch or stem. The torn section is then trimmed neat with a pair of secateurs or a knife.

## LEARN MORE >>>

### Suggested Tasks

Choose one of the herbs from your last task and purchase some seeds. Herbs that grow well from seed include parsley, chives, thyme etc.

Following the procedure listed here sow some seeds, and care for them until they are ready to plant out in the garden. Keep a record of what you sowed and the date. Spend about 10-15 minutes on this task.

### Additional Reading

Read the article included at the end of this lesson: *Propagating Plants From Seed.*