



How-To: **HARVESTING HERBS**

Learn how to harvest your herbs to encourage their growth and production. Harvesting herbs correctly can increase yields and keep herb plants healthy.

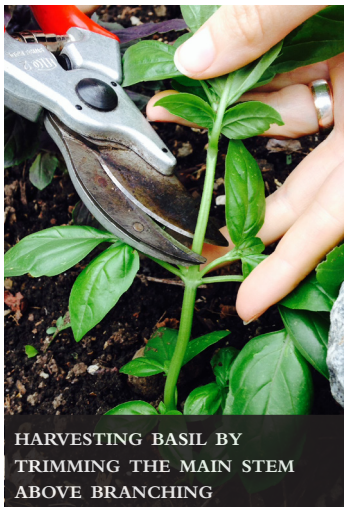


WHEN TO HARVEST

Once herbs are transplanted, allow them to begin developing new growth before harvesting. For direct-seeded herbs, wait for the plant to develop several sets of leaves before beginning to harvest. When harvesting any herb, be careful not to remove more than 1/3 of the plant at a time.

HOW TO HARVEST

We recommend using a sharp pruners or scissors to trim herbs. Think of harvesting as pruning; take parts of several stems, or stems from all over the plant, rather than harvesting from just one area of the plant. Herbs that are flowering can still be cut and used but the flavor of their leaves will be milder than usual. Herb flowers are edible and can be eaten in salads or as garnishes. Leave the flowers to attract beneficial insects. Or, to encourage leafy growth, trim back flowers as they appear.



TIPS AND TECHNIQUES FOR COMMON VARIETIES

- For herbs that have long stems with leaves at the top, like parsley, cut the oldest, outer stems at the base.
- For herbs with bushy growth, like thyme, oregano, sage, and mint, and slow-growing herbs like rosemary and lavender, trim whole or partial stems from multiple areas of the plant.
- To harvest basil, trim the stem, right above the place where two branches grow from the sides of the stem. The plant will then create more stems and more sets of leaves.
- To harvest dill and fennel (fronds) remove side branches as you need the leaves. Eventually, flower heads will form at the tops of the plants. Allow these to develop green seeds, then trim the heads for use in pickling. Or, to save dill seeds for planting or culinary use, clip the whole seed head when the seeds are light brown, and hang upside down in a paper bag to dry fully.
- To harvest cilantro, trim the top 1/3 of the plants regularly, which will encourage more leafy growth. Cilantro is short-lived, especially in hot weather, and will develop flowers and then seeds, which are coriander. To harvest coriander, clip green seeds to use immediately, or allow seeds to turn brown. When the majority of the seeds are brown, clip the plants and hang upside down in a paper bag to dry fully.
- For borage, chives, and lovage, trim leaves as needed.



USING CUT HERBS

Use fresh herbs in cooking or salads, tea, bouquets, or as a room freshener. Herbs can also be preserved for use year-round. See the Info Hub sheet: *Preserving Herbs* for more information.