



SEED to **SPICE** and tea



The
At Home
Apothecary

Step 1:

Sow your seeds in damp soil. Most herb seeds are small, and are sown close to the surface of the soil.

Start Indoors:

Echinacea, Arnica, Basil, Sage, Yarrow

Sow Directly:

Chamomile, Calendula, Skullcap, Milky Oats, Milk Thistle, Hyssop, Catnip, Comfrey, Feverfew, Lemon Balm, Stinging Nettle, Valerian

Needs Stratification:

Burdock, Chaste Tree, Lavender, Motherwort, Passion Flower

Stratify seeds by making small scuffs on them with sandpaper, just scratching through the outer casing of the seed.

Step 2:

Care for your seedlings. They need water, sunlight, and nutrients from the soil. Small seedlings need extra attention in their early stages.

Young seedlings are susceptible to root rot if overwatered, pests and fungus in the soil, and can quickly be overtaken by too much sun and wilt beyond repair.

Keep your seedlings in the shade, where they can still get a few hours of gentle sun a day.

If you have gnats in your soil, water with a 1:10 dilution of 3% hydrogen peroxide in pure water.

Step 3:

Prune your culinary herbs often to encourage regrowth. Plants in the mint family will double in size when pruned appropriately.



Small amounts of home grown, fresh or dried herbs are also great to use in pickling recipes!

Step 4:

Wash and dry the clippings from your herbs for later use. Once dry, store your herbs in an airtight jar in a cool dry place.

Adequate airflow and low humidity are the most important factors in drying herbs. The best quality herbs are also dried out of the sun to keep medicinal compounds and flavorful terpenes from breaking down.

You can hang bundled herbs upside down until they are dry, or clip each leaf and dry it on a drying rack or in a dehydrator.

When using a dehydrator, keep the temperature low to ensure a good preservation on your herbs.

Step 5:

When your herbs begin to flower, its time to decide between harvesting the whole plant, or seed saving for next year.

Most herbs, including basil varieties and tea herbs such as chamomile, hyssop, lavender, and bee balm are all harvested during their flowering period because the most potent compounds and flavors are held in the flowering parts of the plant.

Be gentle and take care when washing and processing flowers for preservation. They are easy to break and bruise, which will affect how they preserve.

Step 6:

If you decide to harvest the entire plant for use in your kitchen, wash and dry the plant material as you did with your clippings.

You can use the fresh plant material for cooking, however if you want to make spice blends or medicinal preparations, you will want to dry the plant material.

Using fresh herbs to make culinary salts:

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup fresh culinary herbs
1 cup salt

Blend your herbs into a paste, and add salt. Spread this mixture onto a baking sheet, and put it into the oven at 220 degrees for 30-40 minutes, or until entirely dehydrated.

Step 7:

Powder or finely grind your dry herbs, and start experimenting with making your own culinary spice blends.

Dried herbs and spice blends will keep for 1-3 years in an airtight jar, in a cool dry place. The freshest and most flavorful herbs are used within 1 year of dehydrating.

You can also dehydrate produce like bell peppers to make paprika, or chili peppers to make red pepper flakes. Many seeds are also used in culinary seasoning. Fennel seed, mustard seed, and coriander seed can all be grown in the garden, and processed in the home kitchen.

Adding silica packets to your airtight jars can help reduce moisture and ensure freshness!