

## Making a Herb Garden Using Containers



Herb gardens are a simple and inexpensive way for you and children to develop horticultural experience and understanding.

You'll need 1 of these (or similar) containers for each plant in your herb garden (if you don't have a place for planting at your school). This container works well because:

- It's deep enough for the roots to grow
- It holds enough soil that it doesn't dry out quickly
- Children can move the containers using the handles
- They're easy to find and not expensive
- Depending on your bag size, about 1 bag soil = 1 container

What you're going to plant, and why:

- Basil – aromatic leaf, herbaceous stem, easy to grow, can often buy a small plant at the supermarket.
- Parsley – many uses, herbaceous stem, easy to grow from seeds, will live about 2 years and re-seed itself, has a distinctive inflorescence - in the nomenclature materials. On an established plant the roots are great to experience!
- Sage – woody stem, beautiful aromatic leaf can be used for eating or decorating, easy to grow once established.
- Rosemary – woody stem, needle-like leaves, a shrub that's easy to grow, great smell when you rub your hands across the plant.
- Thyme – woody stem and tiny needle-like leaves, a shrub that's easy to grow once established, its smell and taste punctuate a salad well (try thyme with fresh strawberries.)

- Mint – Grows like mad from underground shoots so anyone can be successful – it spreads well and can be a groundcover. Many uses (salads, drinks, in vases around the classroom).

#### Information for planting

- Basil – *Ocimum basilicum* - Lamiaceae family. Likes full sun and needs plenty of water.
- Parsley – *Petroselinum crispum* – Apiaceae family (the carrot family). Likes part to full sun. Flowers will form in the second year. After the seeds develop, you won't get many leaves, but you can let the plants re-seed.
- Sage – *Salvia officinalis* - Lamiaceae family. Likes full sun and can grow to 24 inches tall. Get a small plant to start – you'll be able to harvest leaves sooner.
- Rosemary – *Rosmarinus officinalis* - Lamiaceae family. Likes full sun. Can grow to 6 feet tall in climates similar to the Mediterranean! Get a small plant to start – you'll be able to harvest leaves sooner.
- Thyme – *Thymus vulgaris* - Lamiaceae family. Likes full sun. Grows to 12 – 16 inches tall. Thyme seeds germinate in the light.
- Peppermint – *Mentha x piperita* – Lamiaceae family. Likes part to full sun. Grows to about 30 inches. You need to buy a small plant to start.

*Mulching and feeding your herbs with liquid fertiliser in the summer will help them grow and stay strong.*

What can you do with your garden besides planting and tending it?

- Use for food preparation, art, crafts and flower arranging
- Tell stories about the historical uses and beliefs around herbs
- Observe the cycle from seed to seed
- Use specimens for botany activities
- Learn to dry herbs (just as we press flowers)
- Learn about companion planting (eg, parsley doesn't grow well near lettuce) and expand your garden to include vegetables.