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Growing Herbs in Containers

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Many vegetables, herbs and ornamental plants can be grown in containers. This is a great way to spruce up a porch, deck or balcony and make use of limited space for growing food. Herbs that do well in containers (like pots or boxes) include those listed in the table below. Some are annuals, which may need to be planted again every year if not allowed to go to seed. Perennials will overwinter in some climates, but most should be brought indoors during the winter in Kentucky.

Choosing Your Container

- Pots or containers should be at least 6 inches in diameter.
- Deeper pots will accommodate herbs with tap roots or larger root systems.
- If you wish to include more than one plant or type of herb in a single planting, you will need a large container than you would for a single plant. About four plants will fit in a pot 10-12 inches in diameter.
- Containers can be purchased that are made out of numerous materials and colors. Choose something that suits for space and personal taste.

Planting Your Herbs

1. Soak terra cotta pots for 1-2 days before adding soil (they absorb water).
2. Fill your pot or container with potting mixture to within ½ inch of the top. Commercially prepared soil or potting mixes are available garden centers or you can make your own.

	Sun	Partial Sun
Perennial	Bay*, Chives*, Hyssop, Lavender*, Marjoram*, Oregano*, Rosemary*, Sage*, Tarragon*, Thyme*, Verbena*	Catnip, Comfrey, Lemon Balm*, Mint*, Sorrel
Annual	Anise, Borage, Basil*, Caraway, Cilantro (Corriander)*, Dill*, Fennel, Lemongrass, Parsley*, Summer Savory	Chamomile, Chevril*

* indicates herbs recommended for indoor growing



3. Moisten the soil. For potting mixes containing lots of peat, do this the day before you intend to plant.
4. Follow the planting instructions on your seed packet. You may want to plant a few extra seeds. Extra seedlings can be removed once plants have germinated. If you are using plants, hollow out a space in the potting mix big enough to fit the roots of the plant. Remove the plant from its original container and place it in the hole. Fill the potting mix back in around the plant.
5. Water in your seeds or plants.

Caring for Your Herbs

- Water your containers on a regular basis to keep the soil damp to the touch but not soggy.
- Water the pot until it runs out the drainage holes or fills the water reservoir.
- Fertilize the containers three weeks after the plants have two sets of leaves (if planted from seed).
- Plant food or fertilizers for container plants can be found at garden centers or greenhouses. Follow the application recommendations of your fertilizer or plant food label.

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