

GROWING HERBS

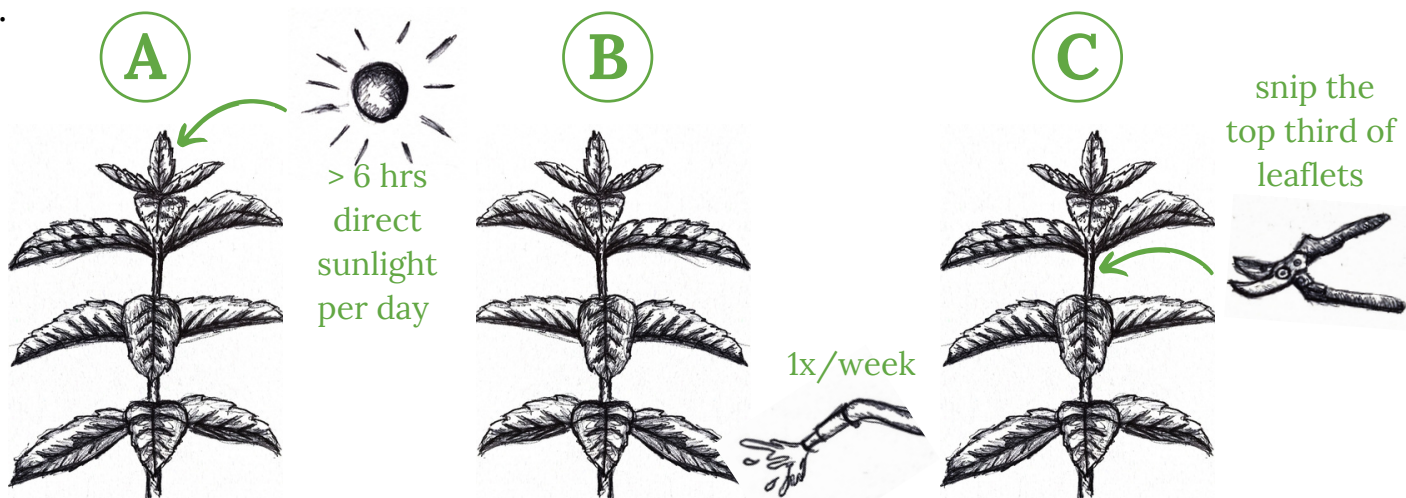
Herbs have medicinal, visual, environmental, and culinary benefits. They are often low maintenance, requiring little water once established. They tend to attract minimal pests. Many herbs also grow well either indoors or outdoors!

OUTDOOR GROWING

A. LIGHT: Many herbs require at least six hours of direct sunlight per day. The more sunlight your herbs receive, the more oil develops and the stronger the flavor and scent of your plant. Spaces that receive south or west-facing light are the best for growing herbs. If they do not receive enough light daily, the plants may be thinner and weaker.

B. WATER: Soak the soil around the base of the plant so that the soil is moist to roughly a depth of 8 inches once a week. This is to make sure that the roots of the plant receive enough water.

C. HARVEST: You can harvest herbs throughout the growing season by snipping off the top third of a plant sprig. Many herbs will have the most prominent flavor if harvested just before the flowering. Mid-morning hours are the optimal time to harvest herbs because the dew has often just dried, which contributes to a higher oil content.



INDOOR GROWING

To grow herbs, it is best to have south-facing windows. If you do not have south-facing windows, consider growing herbs that can tolerate indirect sunlight, such as mint, bay, rosemary, thyme, lemon balm, and tarragon. You may have to rotate your herb containers so that the plants grow consistently. Try to maintain indoor temperatures between 55-70° F for healthy herb plants.

PRESERVATION



4-5 stems per
bundle for
preservation

AIR DRY: If you have time and space, air-drying your herbs is a great option. A slower and longer drying process helps conserve the herb's flavor. First gently rinse your herbs in water and let them dry. Then take 4-5 stems and bundle them together with string and hang them upside down in a warm, dark, dry and well-ventilated room. The leaves will take 7-14 days to dry.

MICROWAVE: Microwaving herbs can be a good preservation option if you have limited time. While you may lose some of the oils, microwaving is an efficient drying method. First rinse the herbs in water and let them dry. Then remove leaves from the stems and lay them out on a plate. Microwave the plate at 15 second intervals until the herbs are thoroughly dry. You may have to experiment with the microwave settings until you find settings that properly dry the herbs.

STORAGE: Once the herb leaves are dry, remove them from the stems (if you haven't already). Place herb leaves into an air-tight container and seal the container. Then store the herbs in a cool, dark, and dry location for up to a year.

FREEZE: Fill each section of an ice cube tray about halfway up with herb leaves. Then pour oil over the entire ice cube tray until it covers your herbs. Place the tray in the freezer and use as needed. Consider freezing small quantities because you cannot refreeze herbs once they are thawed.