



Planting and Caring for Herbs in San Antonio

5 Requirements for Successfully Planting Herbs

1. Sunshine:

Most herbs grow best when offered full sun, but there are some exceptions that appreciate some shade or protection from the hot afternoons, especially during summer.

2. Organic Soil:

Herbs love to be planted in soils that are high in organic matter. 50% of your soil mix should be comprised of organic matter like sphagnum peat moss, or organic compost.

- Soil should drain well to avoid wet, waterlogged roots.
- For herbs planted in pots, use a premium potting soil like Happy Frog Potting Soil

3. Adequate Water Supply:

Herbs that are not given water properly become crispy and dry pretty quickly. Plants will get weak and stop putting out productive foliage.

- Always test your soil moisture level with either your finger stuck into soil to the second knuckle, or purchase a soil moisture meter. Water when soil 2 -3 inches down is dry.

4. Fertilizer:

Feed herbs every 4-6 weeks with high nitrogen formula fertilizer.

- You probably can use your veggie gardening fertilizer, or lawn fertilizer (19-5-9 spring formula, 18-6-12 winter formula).
- Herbs planted in pots should get an extra dose of water-soluble fertilizer every other time you water.

5. Mulch:

Apply a 2' layer of mulch after planting herbs.

- Mulch helps to eliminate weeds that compete for nutrients in the soil.
- Mulch also reduces soil borne disease that can develop from rainwater or irrigation splashing on the soil up onto the herb foliage.

Special Tips for Some of Our Favorite Herbs

Basil:

- Keep flowers pinched off basil to continue leaves and stem growth. However, flowers on basil make excellent pollinator attractors, so grow some basil for kitchen use, and some to let go to flower for the pollinators.
- Clipping basil often encourages basil to continue to grow and promotes a fuller, denser habit.
- Basil is the most tender of our cold sensitive herbs.
- Basil will need to be treated as an annual, harvested before frost, or grown in a greenhouse over winter.

Cilantro

- Cilantro is a cool weather herb. Early fall and early spring are the best times to grow it in San Antonio. Once the heat sets in, cilantro will bolt quickly and go to seed.

Lavender

- Lavender HAS to have well draining soil! It cannot stand wet feet. Lavender thrives in heat and full sunlight. Lavender also tends to thrive on neglect.
- Too much water is usually the killer of this aromatic herb.

Mexican Mint Marigold

- Love the taste of tarragon but have trouble growing it in the heat of our San Antonio climate?
- Try Mexican Mint Marigold instead. Same great flavor as tarragon, larger leaves to harvest and cheerful yellow flowers for fall pollinators.

Mint

- Every garden should have mint planted somewhere, but once planted, mint can be everywhere! Mint becomes invasive quickly, so it's best planted in pots to contain it's spread.
- If you want to plant it in the ground, you should think about cutting the bottom of a plastic pot and burying the pot, then plant the mint in that to corral it's roots.
- Mint thrives in moist soils and appreciates some shade in the hot afternoons.

Harvesting herbs in the mornings gives you the best flavor as their oils will be most concentrated at that time.