

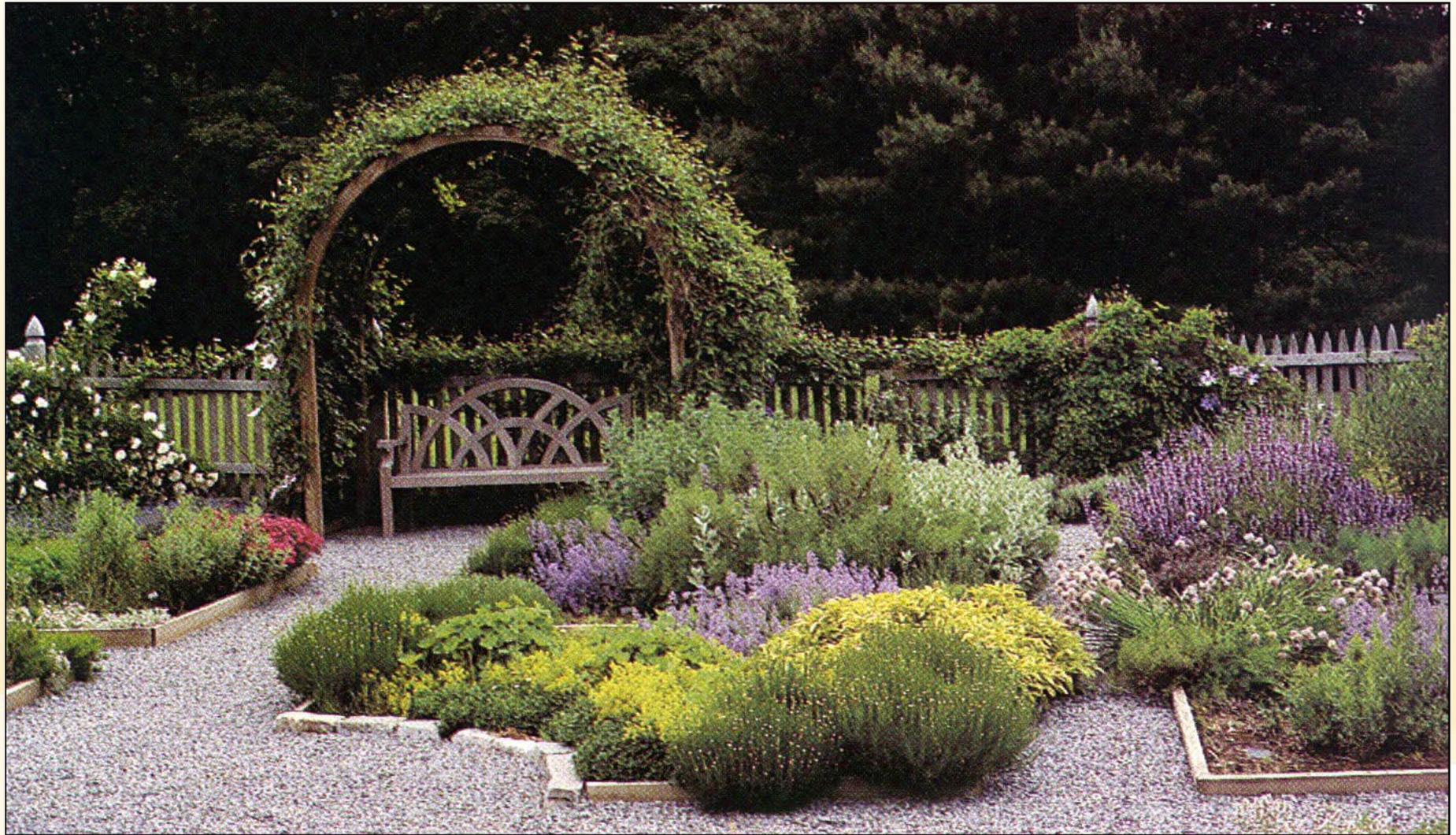
CULINARY HERBS: FROM GARDEN TO GOURMET

A Collaborative Presentation by the
UC Master Gardeners & UC Master Food Preservers
of El Dorado County



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Agriculture and Natural Resources

UC Master Gardener Program



Presenters:
UC Master Gardeners
Jan Keahey & Ada Brehmer &
UC Master Food Preservers
Debbie Hillel, Eileen Hidahl,
Trisha Swan & Tanya Brillisour

Cameron Park Community Center
May 3, 2025



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Agriculture and Natural Resources

UC Master Gardener Program
El Dorado County

Plan For Today

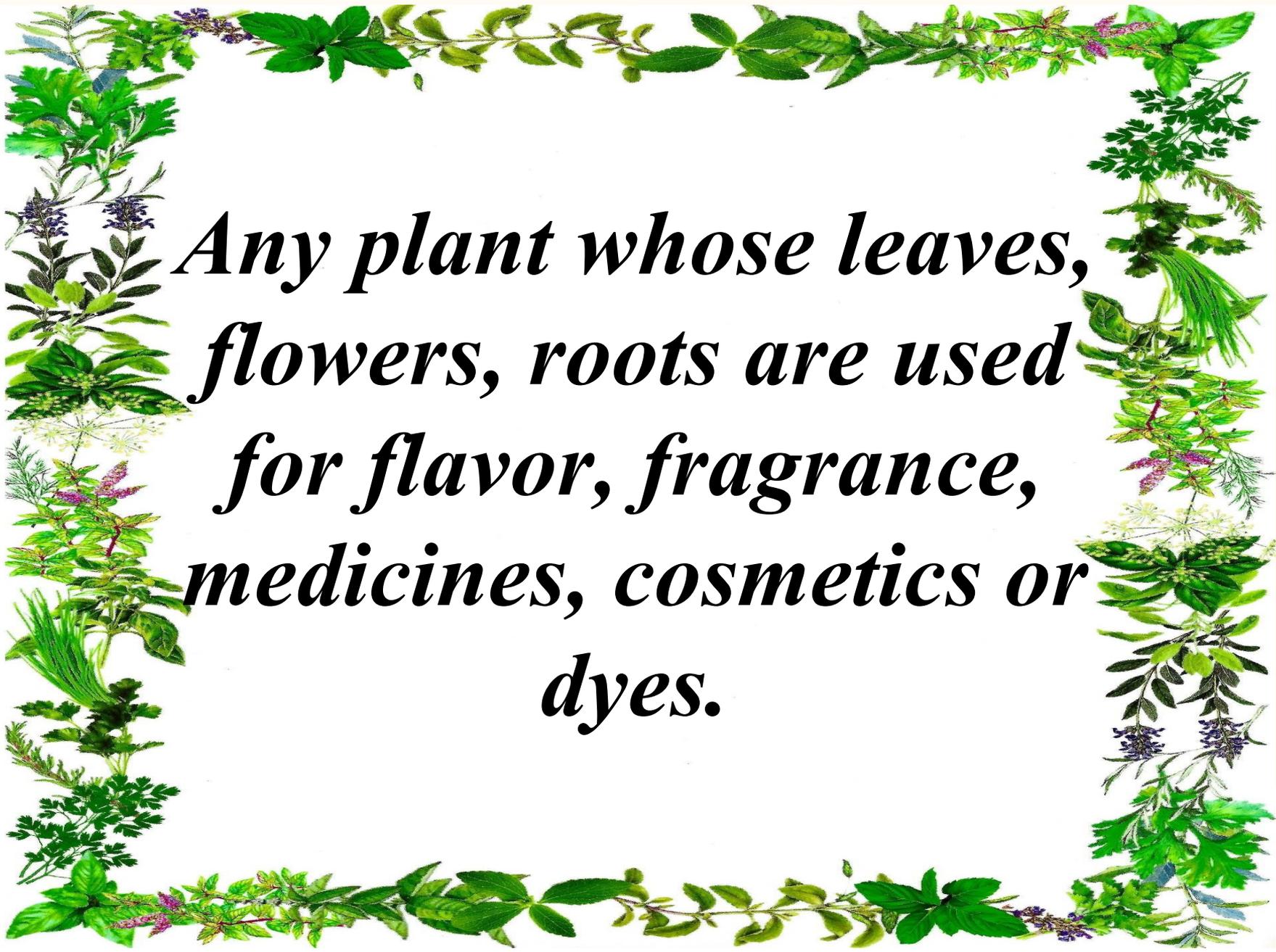
- Exits & Restrooms
- PowerPoint mgeldorado.ucanr.edu
- References
- Propagating from seeds & cuttings
- Questions
- Publications for Sale



Culinary Herbs

- Definition & Latin Names
- Why Grow Herbs?
- Where to grow herbs and what they want
- Propagating – Seeds & Cuttings
- Harvesting & Preserving
- Herbs that Grow Well in El Dorado County





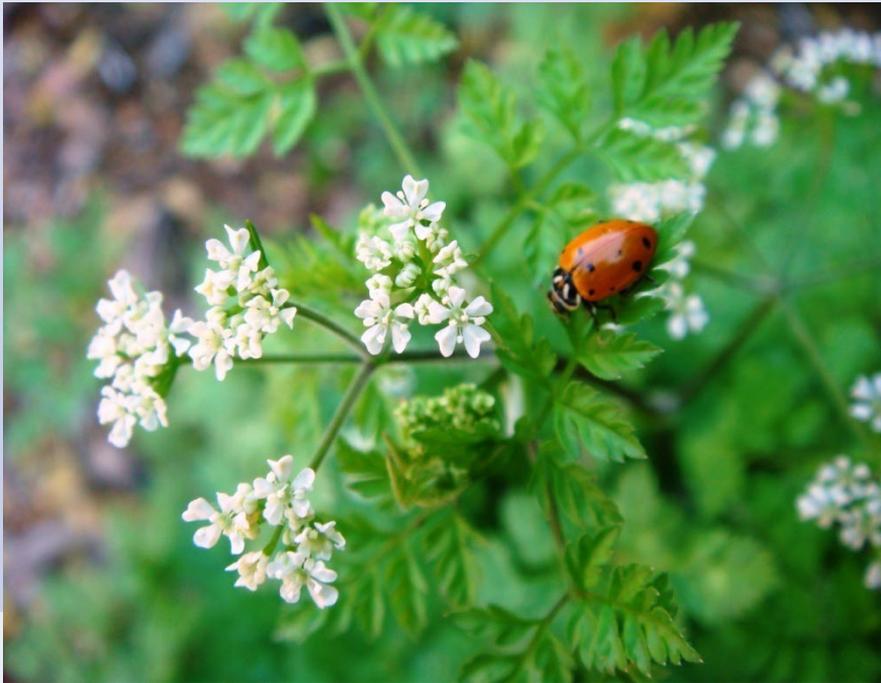
*Any plant whose leaves,
flowers, roots are used
for flavor, fragrance,
medicines, cosmetics or
dyes.*

Herb vs. Spice

- Spice
 - The hard parts of the plant such as roots, bark or seeds
- Herbs
 - The softer parts of the plant including the stems, leaves, flowers



Coriandrum sativum



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Agriculture and Natural Resources

UC Master Gardener Program
El Dorado County

Coriandrum sativum

- The Herb or herbaceous stage of the plant is Cilantro
- The Spice we know as coriander is the seed.
- Day length, sunlight and temperature influence flowering and seed setting.
- Daylight longer than 12 hours will cause cilantro to bolt. Dill also.



THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX



Kieffer Lime (*Citrus hystrix*)

Latin Names Matter

- Common Name vs. Latin name (or Botanical or Scientific)
- Remember, these are plants you're using for food – be sure you have the correct plant.



Coriandrum sativum – Coriander/Cilantro

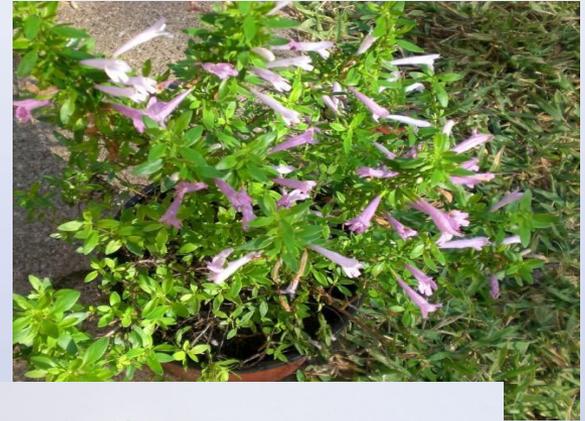
- Vietnamese Coriander, *Persicaria odorata*
Herbaceous perennial, spreads via root system, invasive in mild-winter areas. Leaves have cilantro flavor.
- Mexican Coriander, *Eryngium foetidum*
Biennial herb grown as warm-season annual. To 16" tall, spiny. Cilantro flavored leaves.



Oregano

Mexican Oregano

Poliomintha longiflora



Cuban Oregano

Plectranthus amboinicus



Italian Oregano

Origanum vulgare



Why Grow Culinary Herbs

- Quality and Cost
- Fresh herbs always available
- Healthy way to add flavor to food & beverages



Why Grow Culinary Herbs

Edible Flowers



Why Grow Culinary Herbs?

They are Beautiful and Make Excellent Companion Plants. You get TWO plants for the water of ONE.



Why Grow Culinary Herbs?

Relieve stress



Herbs are an excellent food source for Pollinators

Butterflies – Chives, thyme, marjoram, mint, parsley

Bees – Basil, lemon balm, lavender, sage, savory, rosemary, dill, thyme, chives, fennel, mint

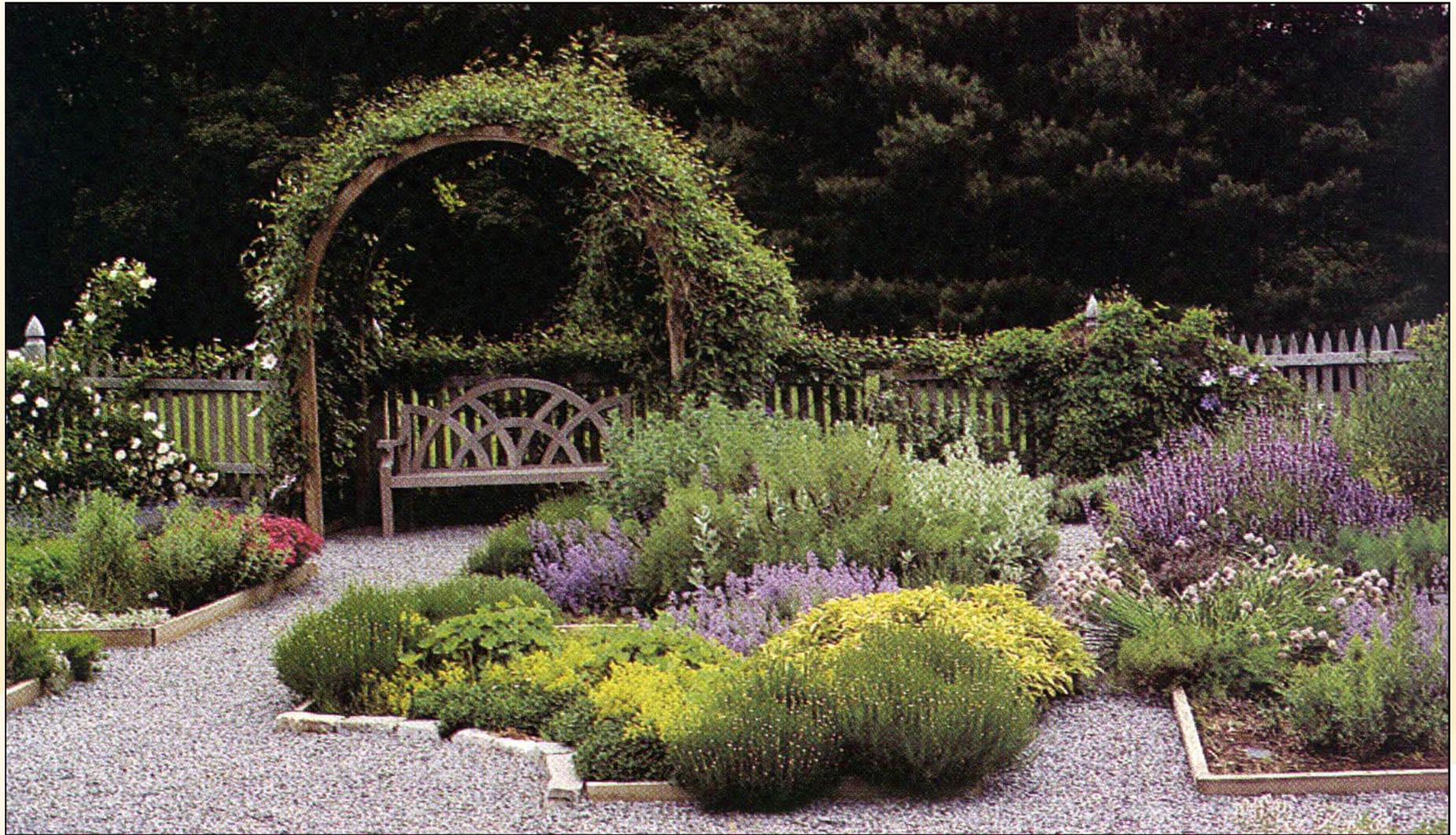
Hummers – Lavender, sage, mint, rosemary, mexican oregano



Deer Resistant Herbs?????

- Sage
- Thyme
- Nepeta
- Oregano
- Mint
- Lavender
- Rosemary





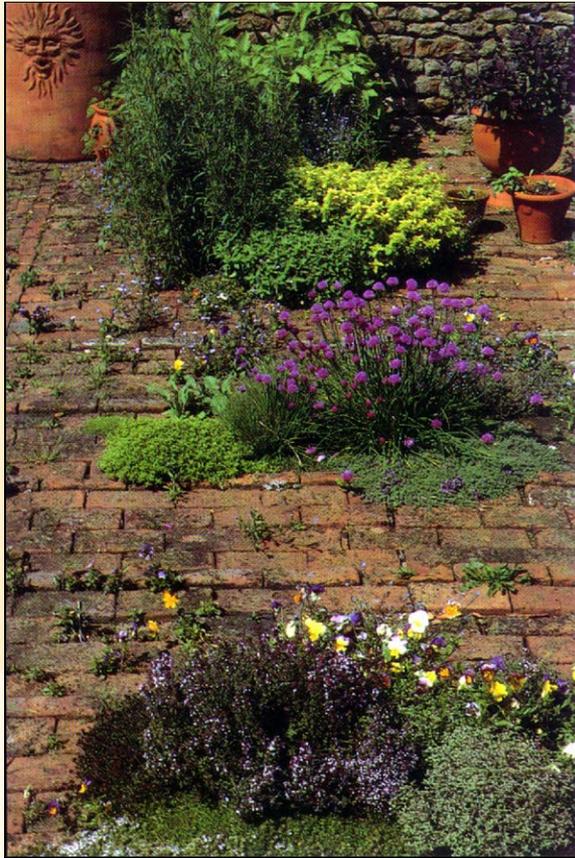
HERB GARDEN SITES

Location

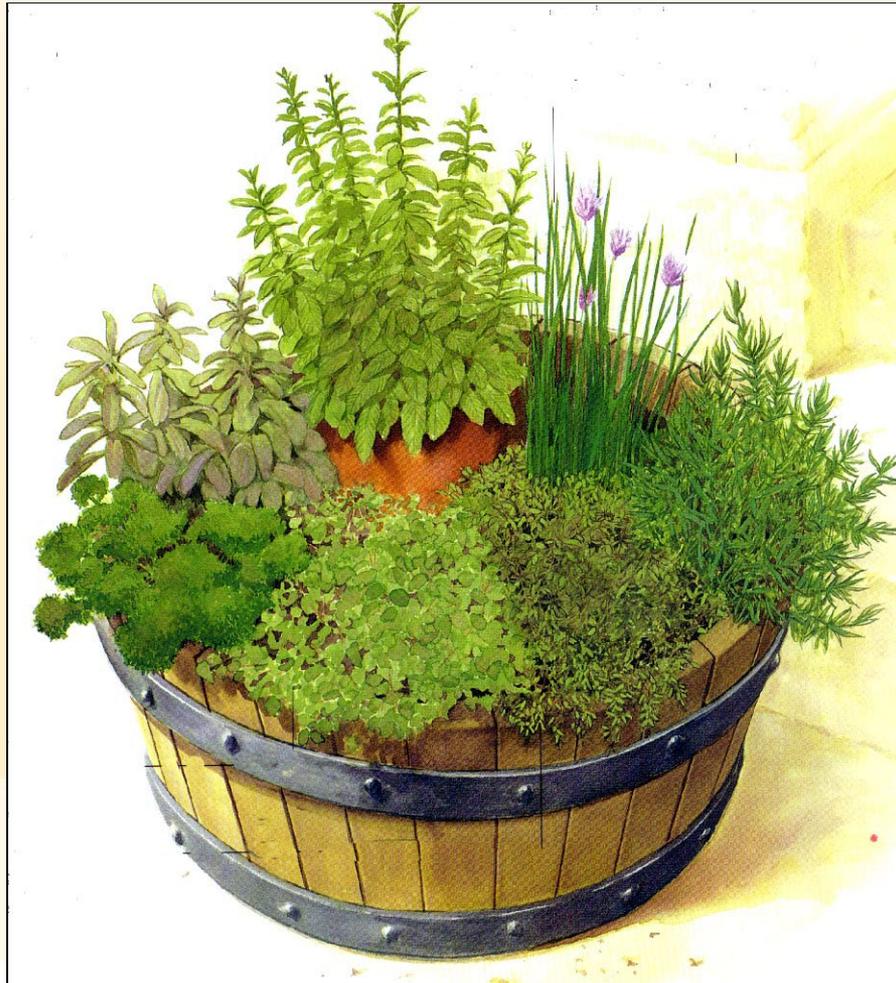
- 4 - 6 hours sun
- Well drained soil
- Freedom from woody plant roots & erosion
- Access to water
- Convenient for regular visits



Paths



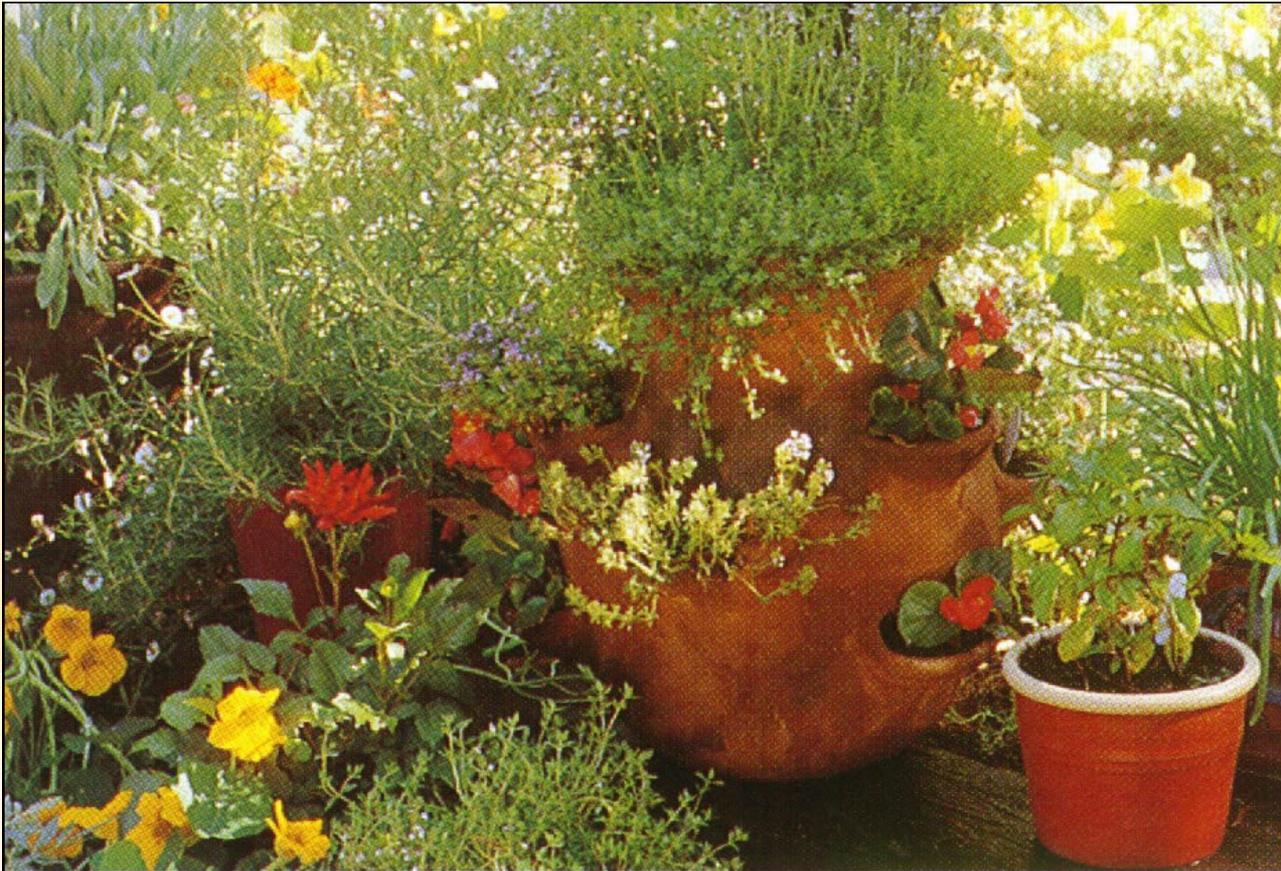
Tubs



Containers

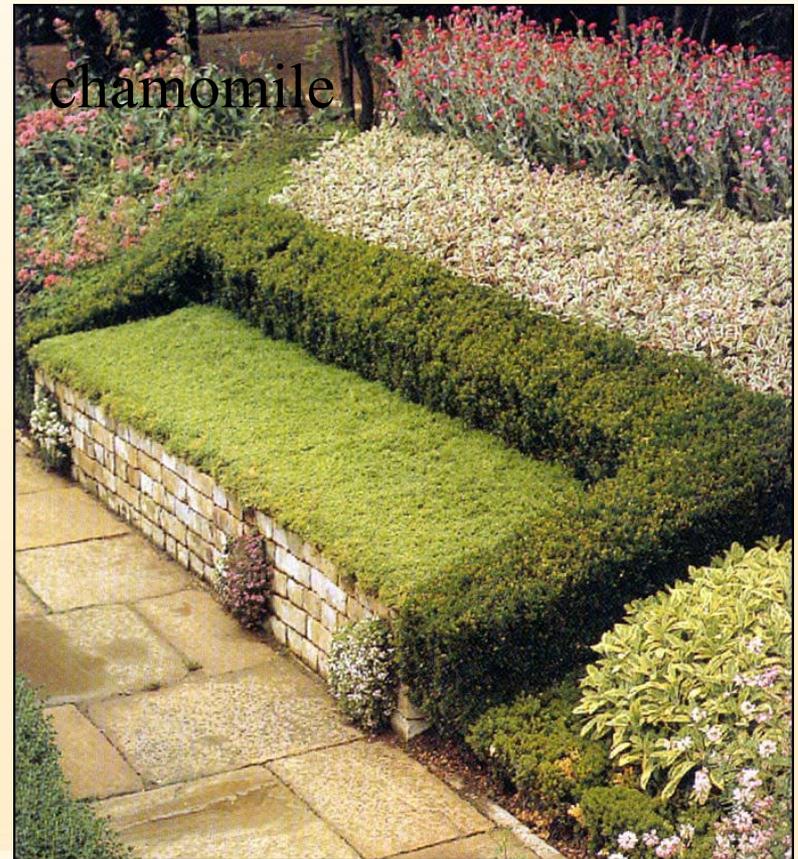


More Containers



Container size is important

Bench

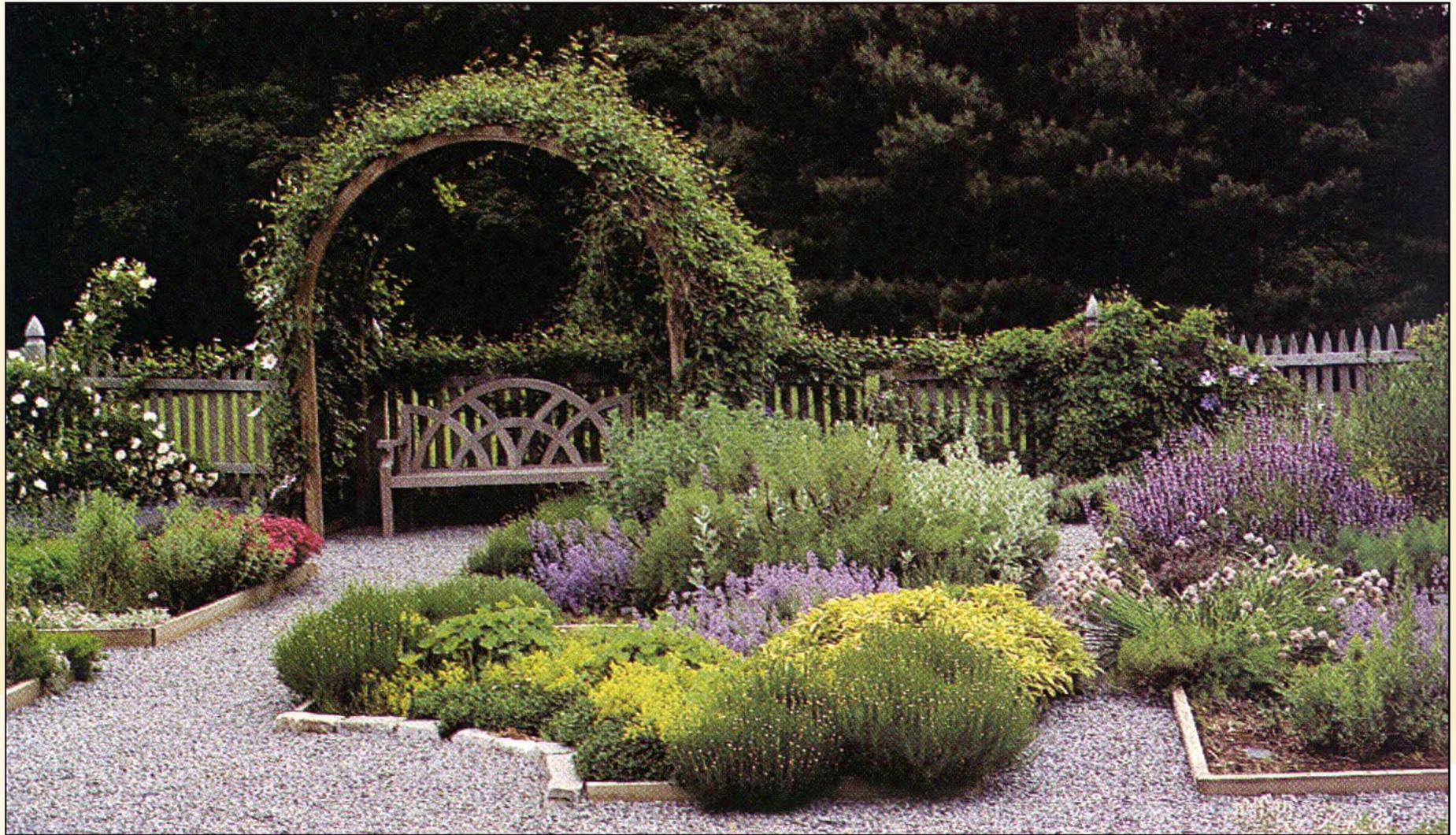


Rock Garden



Companion Plantings





Planting Herbs

Soil Composition

- Well drained
- Add organic matter
- Raised beds
- MULCH!!



Irrigation

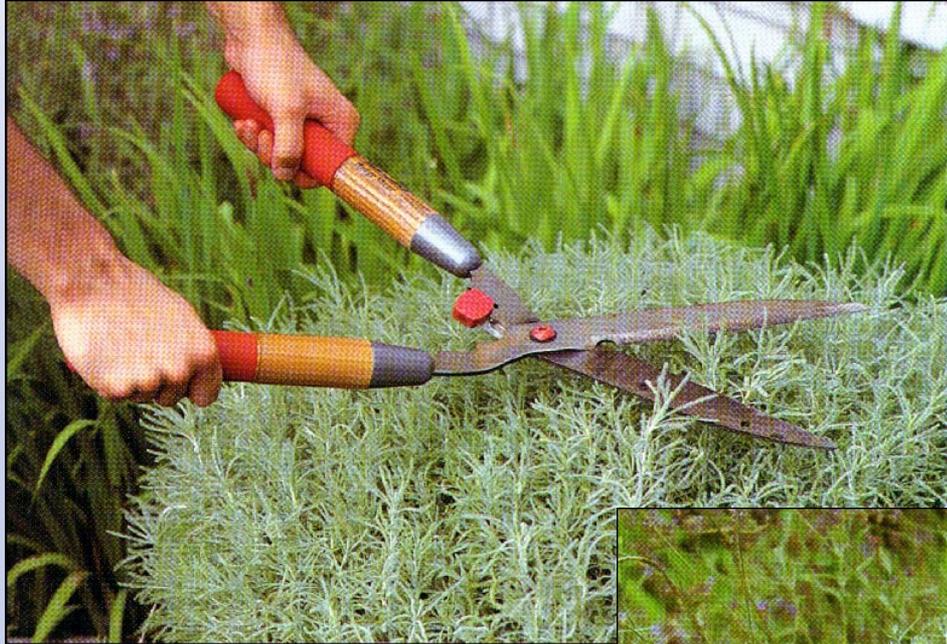
- Many herbs are drought tolerant
- Deep, infrequent watering
- Annuals may require more water (especially if in pots)
- Types of irrigation
 - Best - Soaker hoses & Drip irrigation
 - Not recommended - Overhead sprinklers & hand watering

Fertilizer

- Balanced fertilizer in spring
 - N : nitrogen
 - P : phosphorus
 - K : potassium
 - Worm Compost or castings or fish emulsion
- Think lightly, half strength
- Annual herbs



Pruning



Spring



Pinching



- Remove flower buds
- Cut back top growth
- Important for culinary herbs – promotes bushy growth & prevents plant from going to seed

Deadheading



Pests and Diseases

- Provide good air circulation
- Provide well drained soil
- Fertilize sparingly
- Herbs that repel pests:
 - Sage, Rosemary, Lavender, Basil, Garlic and Mint





PROPAGATING HERBS



- Seeds
- Cuttings
- Layering
- Division



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Agriculture and Natural Resources

UC Master Gardener Program
El Dorado County

Propagating from SEEDS

- Select a sterile germinating medium.
- Select thoroughly clean containers.
- Fill container to $\frac{1}{4}$ " from top with moistened medium.
- Firm medium with fingers or block of wood to provide a uniform, flat surface.
- Sow seed thinly & uniformly at the depth recommended on seed packet, or 2 – 4 times the diameter of the seed.

Propagating from Seed, con't.

- Moisten thoroughly using low pressure mist or place temporarily in tray to water from bottom. Keep soil uniformly moist.
- Cover with plastic dome & place on heat mat until first leaves appear.
- Then place in bright south facing window or under grow lights.

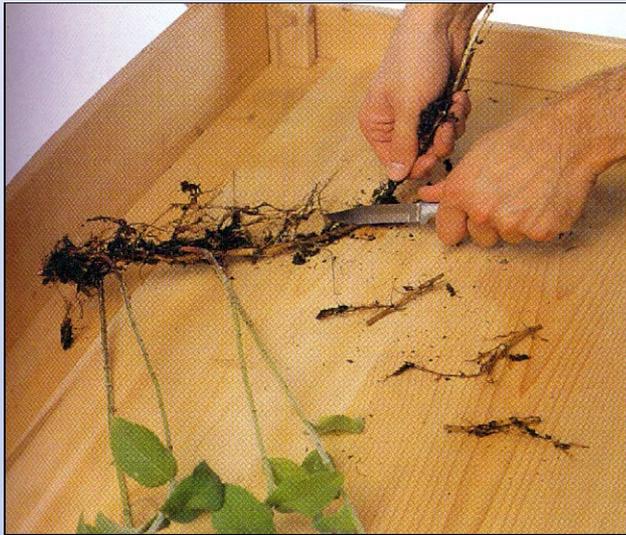


Propagating from Seed, con't.

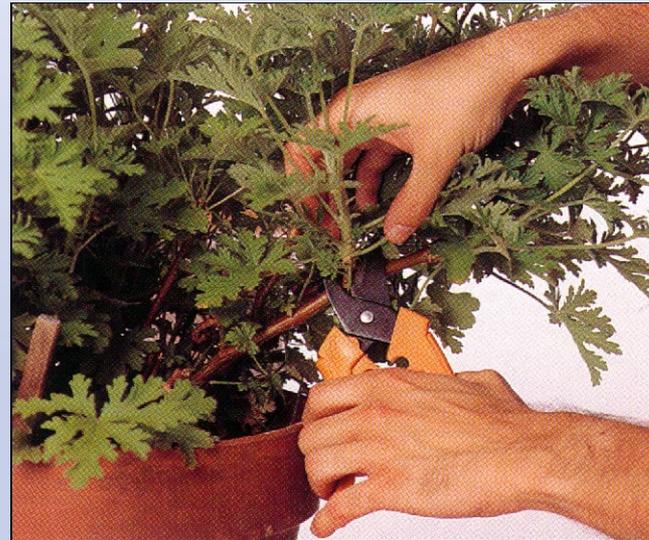
- When first true leaves appear, begin fertilizing with half strength soluble fertilizer.
- Two weeks before planting, begin “hardening” the seedlings by gradually exposing them to the outdoor environment.



Cuttings



Root cuttings



Stem cuttings



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Agriculture and Natural Resources

UC Master Gardener Program
El Dorado County

Propagating from Cuttings

Softwood Stem Cuttings: Propagate at new spring growth.

Semi-hardwood Cuttings: Propagate between mid-July to early September.

Hardwood Cuttings: Propagate between October to late winter.

Propagating from Cuttings, con't.

- Pre-moisten rooting medium.
- Fill pot $\frac{3}{4}$ full.
- Poke a hole with pencil or similar object.
- Cut stems and immediately place in water.
- Trim off lower leaves and trim size/quantity of upper leaves (soft/semi-hardwood).
- Recut stem just below node.



Propagating from Cuttings, con't.

- Re-dip in water.
- Immediately dip in rooting hormone (liquid or dry).
- Place gently into pot.
- Mist (soft/semi-hardwood).
- Place pot under dome and mist daily (soft/semi-hardwood OR keep in dark cool area until roots have formed (hardwood)).

Layering



Layering

- Many plants self layer – mints, oregano, rosemary, thyme, savory & lavender
- Dig hole or use pot
- Fasten stem over hole
- Fill hole with soil and keep damp



Dividing



Dividing

- When: Early spring for fall blooming plants or fall for spring blooming plants
- Dig out root ball and soil
- Use knife, shovel, trowel to split off healthy sections.
- Good for chives, oregano, tarragon, sorrel



HARVESTING & PRESERVING



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Agriculture and Natural Resources

UC Master Gardener Program
El Dorado County

When & How Much



- In the morning
- Throughout the season
- When flower buds appear

Drying Herbs



- Remove discolored leaves
- Make small bundles
- Hang upside down
- Warm, airy, dry location
- Away from direct sunlight
- Good air circulation

Drying Trays



Good



Not So Good

Keep drying area free of dust. Done when “crispy” dryness.

Drying Seeds



Hang upside down in a paper bag.

Other Drying Methods



- Drying Pantry
- Dehydrator



Storage

- Package whole leaves if possible
- Use airtight containers
- Store away from direct sunlight, heat and humidity
- If any moisture is detected after placing in storage container, it's not dry enough.



Freezing Herbs

- For herbs that lose flavor when dried
 - Cilantro, basil, chives
- Freeze whole
- Mince & freeze in water in ice cube tray
- Make into paste & freeze
 - 1/2 c oil/2 c packed herbs
 - Pesto

CULINARY HERBS THAT
GROW WELL
IN EL DORADO COUNTY



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Agriculture and Natural Resources

UC Master Gardener Program
El Dorado County

Dill

Anethum graveolens

- Annual
- Appearance
 - Tall, single stem
 - Feathery, thread-like blue-green leaves
 - Flat umbel flower, 6" across
- Propagate from seed
- Uses
 - Leaves are used in salads and as a garnish for pickles
 - Seeds used as flavoring in cooked veggies

NOTE: Will bolt when day light reaches 12 hours.



Cilantro

Coriandrum sativum

- Annual
- Appearance
 - Bright green, finely grooved stems
 - Upper leaves finely divided
- Propagate: seeds
- Uses
 - Culinary: popular in Asian, Latin and African cooking
 - In shell fish and salads
 - Seeds used in baking and pickling
- Note: Will bolt when day light reaches 12 hours



Tarragon

Artemisia dracunculus

- Perennial
- Appearance
 - Linear to lance like, in groups of 3
- Propagate by cuttings, division
 - Seeds may not be “French tarragon”
- Uses
 - Culinary, “French Fines Herbs”
 - Used with fish, in herb butters and mayo, cream sauces and to flavor vinegar
- Note
 - Over-winter mulch
 - Keep soil from getting too wet



Sage

Salvia officinalis

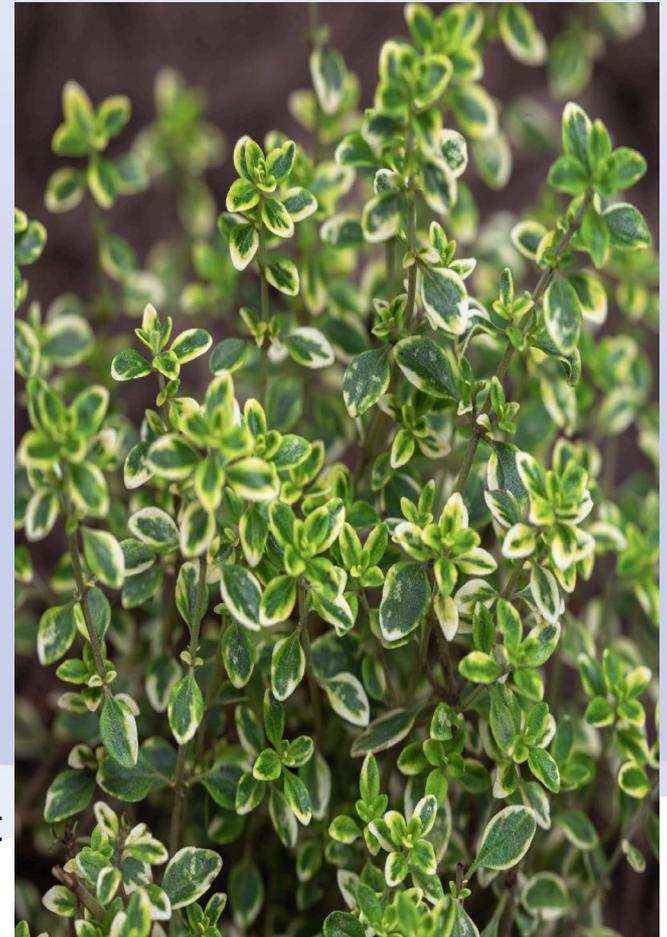
- Perennial
- Appearance
 - Woody shrub with a wide variety of leaf size, shapes and colors
- Propagate by cuttings
- Uses
 - Attractive in wreaths and arrangements
 - Primary use is culinary in salads or flavoring for fatty meats; vinegars, butters
 - Dried to discourage insects



Thyme

Thymus vulgaris

- Perennial
- Appearance
 - Low evergreen shrub
 - Small white/pink flowers
- Propagation by layering
- Uses
 - Mostly culinary as flavoring or garnish
 - Garden ornamental,
- Note
 - Many species, and can range in height from 1" to 1'



Lemon Balm

Melissa officinalis

- Perennial
- Appearance
 - In clumps to 3'
 - Bright green leaves, deeply veined
- Use
 - Strong lemony scent is a good flavoring
 - Potpourri, sachets
- Note
 - Spreads rapidly
 - Good in pots
 - Prune to keep compact



Mints

Mentha spp

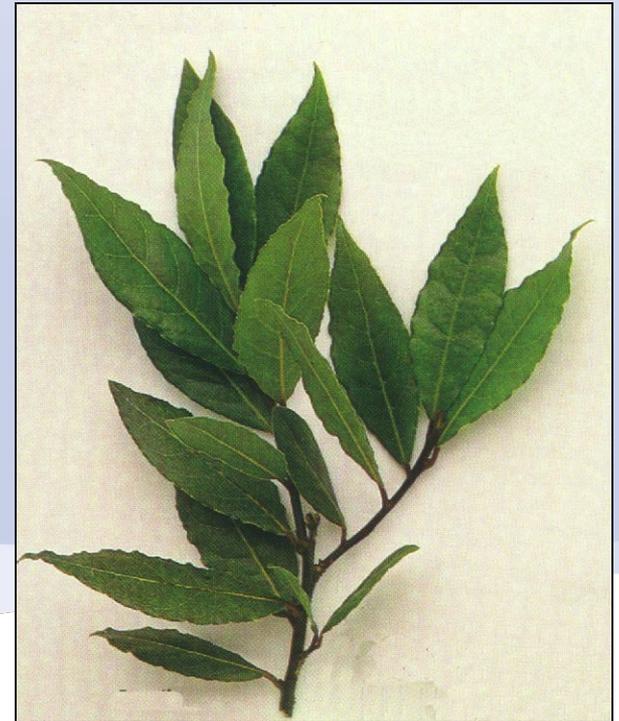
- Perennial
- Appearance
 - Shrubby to 3 ft
 - Glossy green leaves with small flowers in summer and fall
- Propagate by division when dormant
- Use
 - Culinary as flavoring or oil
 - Decorative ornamental
- Note
 - Very invasive, plant in pots
 - Many varieties



Bay

Laurus nobilis

- Evergreen tree or shrub
- Appearance
 - Tree/shrub, slowly growing to 40 feet in ground
 - Leathery green leaves
- Propagate from cuttings
- Use
 - Leaves as flavoring for soups, stews, sauces
- Note
 - Grows well and for a long time in pots
 - Good for topiary



Rosemary

Rosemary officinalis

Salvia Rosmarinus (2017)

- Perennial
- Appearance
 - Shrub with evergreen, needlelike leaves
 - Blue, lavender, white flowers
 - Upright & prostrate varieties
 - Propagate by layering or cuttings
- Uses
 - Landscape shrub
 - Culinary flavoring, dried or fresh



Lavender

Lavendula spp.

- Perennial
- Appearance
 - 6" to 4'
 - Green to gray narrow leaves, some fern-like
 - White to deep purple flowers on spikes
- Propagate by division
- Uses
 - Mostly aromatic, perfumes, potpourri
 - Excellent in fresh & dried arrangements
- Note:
 - Many, many varieties



Scented Geranium

Pelargonium geraniaceae

- Perennial
- Appearance
 - Varied and interesting leaf patterns
 - Insignificant flowers
- Propagate by stem cuttings
- Uses
 - Culinary in teas, jellies
 - Potpourri
- Note
 - Scent is in the leaves: rose, lemon, peppermint, apple, coconut, nutmeg, etc
 - Frost sensitive



Lemon Verbena

Aloysia triphylla

- Perennial
- Appearance
 - Woody shrub to 5+' in EDC
 - Deciduous
 - Long pale, green pointed leaves
- Propagate from stem cuttings
- Uses
 - Culinary in tea
 - Lemon flavoring in salad dressings
 - Potpourri
- Note
 - sensitive to cold, protect in winter



Calendula

Calendula officinalis

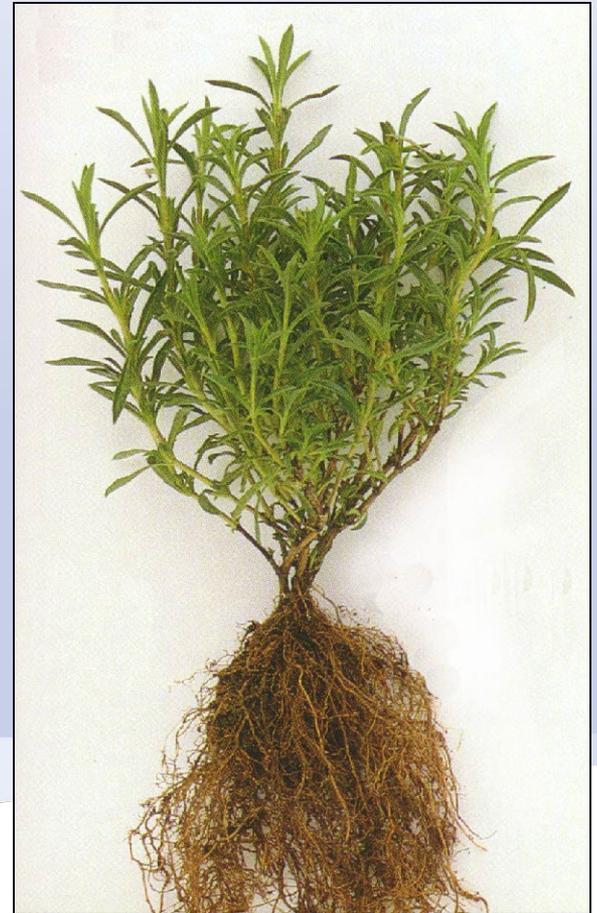
- Annual
- Appearance
 - Erect
 - Many branches
 - Solitary terminal flower, ranging from pale yellow to deep orange
- Propagate - seeds
- Uses
 - Flower petals are used in salads and as garnish



Winter Savory

Satureja montana

- Perennial
- Appearance
 - Woody compact shrub, 6"-12"
 - Small white or lilac flowers
 - Dark green, lance shaped leaves
- Propagate from cuttings
- Uses
 - Culinary herb for fish and meats
- Note
 - Harvest all winter
 - Summer savory - *Satureja hortensis*



Parsley

Petroselinum crispum

- Biennial
- Appearance
 - Curled to flat green leaves
- Propagate from seed
- Uses
 - Culinary flavoring & decoration;
 - Thought to aid digestion
- Note:
 - Seeds slow to germinate, soak in hot water or freeze overnight; remove flower stalks to extend life in second year.



Chives

Allium schoenoprasum/
A. tuberosum

- Perennial, Appearance
 - Tubular or flat blade-like leaves
 - Purple or white ball-shaped flowers
 - 6" - 2'
- Propagate
 - seeds or division
- Uses:
 - Culinary: flowers for garnish, vinegars
 - Leaves & purple flowers used for dyes
- Note:
 - Chives are excellent ornamental plants



Garlic

Allium sativum

- Annual
- Appearance
 - Flat bladelike leaves
 - Purple or white flowers
 - 18" - 2'
- Propagate - cloves
- Uses:
 - Culinary: flowers for garnish, vinegars
- Notes
 - Many cultivars
 - Valuable companion plant
 - Cut off or bend back flower stalks as they form



Oregano/Marjoram

Origanum vulgare/marjorana

- Perennial
- Appearance
 - Green, golden colors with pink white , purple flowers
 - 6" - 3'
- Propagate by division or cuttings (hybridize readily)
- Uses
 - Attracts bees & butterflies
 - Overall flavoring
 - Leaves dry well
- Notes
 - Oregano hardier and more flavorful than marjoram
 - Excellent ornamental plants



Basil

Ocimum basilicum

- Annual
- Appearance
 - 6" - 2'
 - Green, purple leaves
 - White, pink, lavender flowers
- Propagate from seed or cuttings
- Uses
 - Culinary: pesto, herbal vinegars, overall flavoring
- Notes
 - Works well in containers
 - Frost sensitive
 - Many varieties: "Purple," "Lemon," "Thai," etc.



Resources

- Sacramento Master Gardeners:
<http://sacmg.ucanr.edu>
- Oregon State Extension Service:
<https://extension.oregonstate.edu/gardening>
- Rose Loveall, Morningsun Herb Farm Videos:
www.morningsunherbfarm.com
- The Kitchen Herb Garden, Rosiland Creasy, Tuttle Publishing
- Edible Landscaping, Rosiland Creasy, Sierra Club Books

More Resources

- Sacramento Digs Gardening Blog:
<https://sacdigsgardening.californialocal.com>
- The Edible Flower Garden, Rosiland Creasy,
Periplus Editions

Bon appetit



Thank you!

- Thank you to the Cameron Park Community Center for supporting our programming today.
- Visit our UC Master Gardeners of El Dorado County website!
 - Upcoming class and events
 - Office hours and contact information
 - Sherwood Demo Garden hours and information
 - Gardening resources
- Please keep an eye out for an emailed evaluation from the statewide UC Master Gardeners office and let us know what you've learned!



- Follow us:      

