

Growing Culinary Herbs in Central NC



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Culinary Herbs for NC

- Many are easily grown!
- To grow successfully, need to know:
 - Life Cycle
 - Annual- cool or warm season
 - Perennial
 - Preferred Conditions
 - Sun or Shade
 - Soil Drainage
 - Fertility



Culinary Herbs for NC: ANNUALS



Basil

Ocimum basilicum

- Warm Season Grower
 - Do not plant out too early
- Easy from cuttings or seed
 - Successive sowings
 - Can overwinter indoors
- Sun, well drained soil
- Low fertility
- Prevent drought stress
- Pinch regularly, cut off flowers
- Many varieties available



Basil Downy Mildew

- **New disease** - first recorded in NC 2009
- This strain only effects basil
- Other strains of downy mildew infect cucumbers and cabbage
- **Control: destroy affected leaves, avoid overhead irrigation, fungicides?**
- **Pesto type basils are most susceptible**
- Does not overwinter in NC! - spores 'float in' from further south each season



Basil Varieties



'Purple Ruffles'

'Opal' - purple leaf

Thai Basil, 'Siam Queen'
- compact 12"



Cinnamon or
Mexican Basil



'Italian Large Leaf' - pesto

Greek Columnar -
very upright to 4',
does not bloom



'Spicy Globe' -
Small leaves on
compact plants

Other Warm Season Annuals



Cuban Oregano

Plectranthus amboinicus

Strongly fragrant, large fleshy leaves. Grown as a houseplant or ornamental. Sun to pt. shade, well drained, moist soil. Overwinter indoors

Perilla

Perilla frutescens

Heat loving, fast growing annual - self seeds eagerly. Leaves used in Japanese cuisine. Sun, well drained soil. Drought tolerant.



Parsley

Petroselinum crispum

- Cool season annual
- Sow fall or early spring
 - Soak seed for 6-8 hrs
- Dies out mid summer after flowering
- Larval host for Black Swallowtail
- Sun - pt. shade, moist, well drained soil



Italian Flat Leaf -
variety
neapolitanum



Curly Parsley

Black Swallowtail

Egg



Young Caterpillars



Caterpillars



Will also eat:
Fennel, Dill,
Queen Anne's
Lace, Carrot,

Adult Male



Adult Female

Chrysalis



Parsley Relatives



Lovage

Levisticum officinale

Leafy plant, celery taste. May be perennial.



Dill

Anethum graveolens

Fermy foliage is attractive, blooms nice cutflowers



Cilantro, Coriander

Coriandrum sativum

Fall and early spring for foliage - successive sowings. Let mature for seed.



Other Cool Season Annuals



Borage

*Borago
officinalis*

Coarse hairy plants with edible
flowers. Biennial.



Roman Chamomile

Chamaemelum nobile

Perennial but not tolerant of humid
heat. Ferny foliage, flowers used to
make tea. Sun, well drained soil.



Culinary Herbs for NC: PERENNIALS



Mediterranean Herbs

- Many common perennial culinary herbs
 - Rosemary, Sage, Thyme, Oregano
- Require full sun, excellent drainage
- Low fertility, pH 6.0 or above
- Good in raised beds or containers
- Drought tolerant
- Irrigation and fertilizer lead to disease problems and reduce flavor
- Mulch with pea gravel or bark
- Expect some deaths during August!



Oregano



Greek Oregano

Origanum vulgare
subspecies *hirtum*

Preferred Culinary



Common Oregano

Origanum vulgare

Flowers in summer, less
flavorful



Sweet Marjoram

Origanum marjorana

Culinary - tricky to
grow

Italian Oregano =

O. marjorana x *O.*
vulgare

Easier to grow

Sage

Salvia officinalis



'Purpurascens'



'Tricolor'



'Icterina'



'Berggarten'

Favorite
culinary, large
leaves.

Common Thyme

Thymus vulgaris



'Broadleaf English'

'Narrow Leaf French'



Lemon Thyme

Thymus x citriodorus

Lower growing with softer stems.
Several gold leaved and variegated
varieties are available.

Lavenders



English Lavender

Lavandula angustifolia
- not heat tolerant



Spanish Lavender

Lavandula stoechas

Most long lived lavender in SE



French Lavender

Lavandula dentata - not cold hardy



Lavandin

Lavandula x intermedia

L. angustifolia x *L. latifolia* (Spike Lavender)

'Grosso' does okay

Rosemary

Rosmarinus officinalis

- Tough, evergreen shrub
- Sun, good drainage
- Drought, salt, and pH tolerant
- Deer resistant
- Ornamental and culinary - upright and trailing forms available
- Upright varieties typically reach 3'-4' tall and wide or more!



Southern Purple Mint Moth

- Very small caterpillar
- Lots of webbing and frass
- Must treat when caterpillars first start feeding - spinosad, B.t.
- Does not cause permanent damage



Bay

Laurus nobilis

- Shrubs or small tree
- Grows well in containers - bring indoors in winter
- Not hardy outdoors in the piedmont



Other Perennial Herbs



Chives

Allium schoenoprasum

Extremely easy from seed or division.
Long lived, self seed. Sun well drained
soil, drought tolerant.



Garlic Chives

Allium tuberosum

Taller than chives, same
requirements. Self seeds
prolifically.

Mints

All spread extremely vigorously!!



Spearmint

Mentha spicata

Sun to part shade,
moist to average
soil.



Peppermint

Mentha piperita

Grow in containers
above ground.



Pineapple Mint

Mentha suaveolens
'Variegata'



Apple Mint

Mentha suaveolens

Mexican Mint Marigold

- *Tagetes lucida*
- A perennial marigold!
- Tarragon substitute (leaves)
- Yellow flowers in fall, 3' x 2'
- Sun, well drained soil



Fennel



- *Foeniculum vulgare*
- Perennial parsley relative
- Anise flavor
- Bronze leaf forms often used as ornamentals
- Sun - light shade, moist to dry soils
- 3'-5' tall, yellow flowers in summer - attracts beneficials
- Larval host -Black Swallowtail
- Florence Fennel is related but different, grow as a summer annual



Other Perennial Herbs



Lemon Balm

Melissa officinalis

Very easy - sun to part shade, well drained soil. Easy from seed or cuttings.

Salad Burnet

Poterium sanguisorba

Sun to light shade, well drained soil. Leaves have cucumber flavor - best in spring and fall.



Horseradish

Armoracia rusticana

Sun, rich, moist soil. Harvest roots by digging into clump rather than digging whole clump up.

Other Perennial Herbs



Pineapple Sage

Salvia elegans

Very easy - sun to part shade, well drained soil. Easy from seed or cuttings.

Red flowers in fall, pineapple scented foliage.



Rose Scented Geranium

Pelargonium graveolens

Sun, good drainage. Wonderful fragrance, many other varieties

Non Hardy Perennial Herbs

Grow outside in summer, bring inside for winter



Lemongrass

*Cymbopogon
flexuosus*



Lemon Verbena

Aloysia triphylla



Culinary Ginger

Zingiber officinale

Recommended Books

- Southern Herb Growing
 - M. Hill and G. Barclay
- Rodale's Illustrated Encyclopedia of Herbs