# 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**



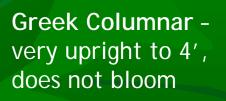
'Opal' - purple leaf

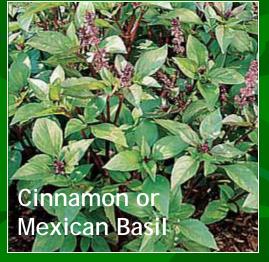
### Thai Basil, 'Siam Queen' - compact 12"



Italian Large Leaf'

- pesto









'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

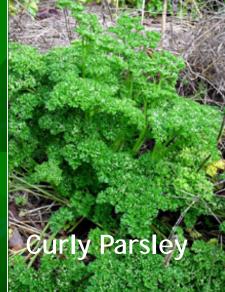
#### Perilla frutescens

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



# **Black Swallowtail**





Egg

Caterpillars





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



### Adult Male





Adult Female

# **Parsley Relatives**



### Dill

### Anethum graveolens

Ferny foliage is attractive, blooms nice cutflowers

### Lovage

Levisticum officinale

Leafy plant, celery taste. May be perennial.





### Cilantro, Coriander

Coriandrum sativum

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

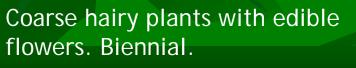
# **Other Cool Season Annuals**





### Borage Borago

officinalis



### **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!





### Greek Oregano

Origanum vulgare subspecies hirtum Preferred Culinary

# Oregano



Common Oregano Origanum vulgare Flowers in summer, less flavorful



Sweet Marjorum Origanum marjorana Culinary - tricky to grow Italian Oregano = O. marjorana x O. vulgare

Easier to grow

# Sage Salvia officinalis



### 'Purpurascens'



### 'Tricolor'



**'Berggarten'** Favorite culinary, large leaves.

'Icterina'

# 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.



### English Lavender Lavandula angustifolia - not heat tolerant



# Lavenders



Lavender Lavandula stoechas

Most long lived lavender in SE



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

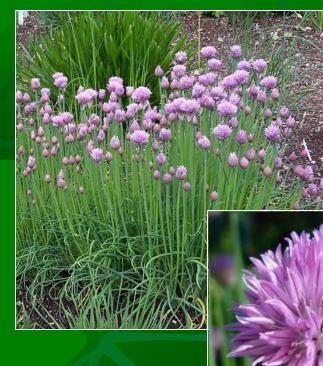




Bay Laurus nobilis Shrubs or small tree Grows well in containers - bring indoors in winter Not hardy outdoors in the piedmont



# **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!!







### Peppermint Mentha piperita Grow in containers above ground.



### **Pineapple Mint**

Mentha suavolens 'Variegata'



Apple Mint Mentha suavolens

# **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 - <u>attracts beneficials</u>
- Larval host -Black
   Swallowtail
- <u>Florence Fennel</u> is related but different, grow as a summer annual



# **Other Perennial Herbs**



### Salad Burnet

Poterium sanguisorba

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



### Lemon Balm

Melissa officinalis

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



### 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



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