



# Learn to Grow 2: Herbs & Spices

## Outdoor Activities – At Home

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### WHAT MAKES IT MEANINGFUL

Now that you have become a pro at vegetable gardening, why not take it a step further and learn how to cultivate herbs and spices! It doesn't matter if you are a beginner or experienced gardener. Gardening is good for all ages and skill levels, which means that anyone, as long as they want to, can learn to cultivate and harvest their own plants. Not only will you develop some new and useful life skills, but it also gives you the opportunity to grow and learn about yourself. Gardening empowers you and enables you to feel and be more independent. Imagine the tasty dishes you can create, enhanced by the true flavours of herbs and spices grown by you, at home, and on your own time. Learning how to grow some basic herbs – basil, parsley and dill, is a good start in creating delightful dishes from a ton of amazing cuisines. Growing herbs at home has its own perks; instead of shopping for herbs and spices, why not save some money and pick fresh leaves right from the plant. There is also the added benefit of having the wonderfully warm and fragrant aroma of fresh herbs greeting you in your home.

### TIME

Approximate time to plant: Seeds can be sowed (planted) indoors at nearly any time of the year. Plant seeds in separate planter pots around the same time to harvest herbs within the same timeframe.

- Growing basil indoors in a planter pot from seeds: Can be planted anytime.
  - Mckenzie© Sweet basil seeds take 85 days (12 weeks) to harvest.
- Growing parsley indoors in a planter pot from seeds: Can be planted anytime.
  - Mckenzie© Champion Moss Curled parsley seeds take 75 days (11 weeks) to harvest.
- Growing dill indoors in a planter pot from seeds: Can be planted anytime.
  - Mckenzie© Fernleaf dill seeds take 70 days (10 weeks) to harvest.

Approximate time to harvest: Depending on the type of seedling, herbs can be harvested between 6 to 13 weeks after seeds have been sowed (planted) into planter pots.

### MATERIALS

Gardening Tools and Supplies:



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- A Bag of Basil Seeds – Sweet (Approx. \$1.89)
- A Bag of Parsley Seeds – Champion Moss Curled (Approx. \$1.89)
- A Bag of Dill Seeds – Fernleaf (Approx. \$1.89)
- 3 Round Planter Pots – 12+ inches wide (Approx. \$0.99 - \$49.99)
- 3 Round Planter Saucers – 12+ inches wide (Approx. \$0.79 - \$9.99)
- Miracle Gro® Organic Vegetable & Herb Soil (Approx. \$14.99)
- Hand Trowel (Approx. \$9.99 - &12.99)
- Hand Fork/ Hand Cultivator (Approx. \$9.99 - \$14.99)
- Hand Pruners/ Pruning Shears (Approx. \$9.99 - \$39.99)
- Watering Can(s) (Approx. \$7.99 - \$29.99)
- Soil Monitor (Approx. \$14.99)
- Gardening Gloves (Approx. \$1.99 - \$24.99)

## Useful Extras:

- Hand towel or Paper Towels (in case you sweat or get dirty)

Note: Expenses are based off of Canadian Tire® pricing.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- Before gardening, take note of all of the gardening tools and supplies that you currently have and do not have. Gardening indoors does not require as many supplies as would be needed to prepare a garden outdoors. Acquire the necessary tools to ensure that you have what you need to make gardening as pleasant as possible, and to optimize the experience for everyone involved.
- When thinking about gardening, keep in mind the following tips:
  1. Location is important! Find a location in your building that allows for lots of sunlight. Keep in mind the amount of sun exposure required to grow each herb.

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2. Be mindful of the space where you are gardening! Ensure you know the approximate height plants will grow, and keep the area clear.
  3. Keep in mind the size of the planter pot and consider what is a sufficient amount of seeds to plant in the soil, based on the sowing instructions.
  4. Be aware of the pH level in soil, as this determines how fertile the soil is and how well plants will grow. The growth of certain plants can occur within a specific range.
- Now it's time to begin gardening and preparing the soil before planting.
    1. Apply Miracle Gro® Organic Vegetable & Herb soil into each planter pot. Put the planter pot into a planter pot saucer – this acts as a basin for water.
    2. Loosen and break up the Miracle Gro® soil so that it is evenly distributed, where moisture can spread, but is also able to drain well.
    3. Now that the soil is prepared, read instructions for how to space and sow plant seeds. Position seeds into the soil and water the soil.
  - To grow basil indoors in a planter pot from seeds:
    1. Basil can be planted at nearly any time of the year, but plan to sow seeds at approximately the same time as other plants, to begin harvesting herbs around the same timeframe.
    2. To grow, basil requires full-sun exposure, with 6 to 8 hours of direct sunlight.
    3. Use the soil monitor to measure the soil. Basil requires a pH level that is in the 6.0 to 7.5 range, meaning that the soil is slightly acidic to neutral.
    4. Read instructions on the basil package for how to space and sow seeds. Sow seeds ¼ inch deep.
    5. Water occasionally to ensure that the soil remains moist.

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6. Once seedlings emerge and there are 2 to 3 pairs of leaves, thin seedlings to one plant every 10 to 12 inches. Basil grows to approximately 12 to 24 inches in height. For larger varieties, plant seedlings further apart, about 16 to 24 inches. The separating and spacing of seedling plants is dependent on the size of the planter pot.
  7. After the seedlings have produced 1 to 6 leaves, prune to above the second set of leaves. This encourages the plant to start branching and enables more leaves to grow and be harvested.
  8. Every time the plant has 6 to 8 leaves, repeat pruning the branches back to their first set of 1 to 6 leaves.
  9. After 6 weeks, pinch or prune off the center shoot to prevent early flowering. If flowers do grow, cut them off.
  10. Basil leaves can begin to be harvested 42 days (6 weeks) approximately after planting. Plants can grow approximately 30 to 60 centimeters tall.
    - a. Leaves can begin to be harvested as soon as plants grow 6 to 8 inches tall.
    - b. Harvest leaves in the early morning when leaves are juiciest.
    - c. Pick leaves regularly to encourage more leaves to grow.
    - d. The best way to store basil leaves is to freeze them by packaging whole or chopped leaves in airtight, re-sealable plastic bags and putting them in the freezer. Basil can also be dried by pinching off leaves at the stem and placing them into a shady, well-ventilated area; if leaves are not completely dry after 3 to 4 days, place them in the oven on the lowest setting with the door slightly open while turning and checking the leaves frequently. It is good to note that in drying the leaves, some of the flavor is lost.
- To grow parsley indoors in a planter pot from seeds:
    1. Parsley can be planted at nearly any time of the year, but plan to sow seeds at approximately the same time as other plants, to begin harvesting herbs around the same timeframe.
    2. To grow, parsley requires part- to full- sun exposure, with 6 or more hours of direct sunlight.

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3. Use the soil monitor to measure the soil. Parsley requires a pH level that is around 6.0, meaning that the soil is slightly acidic.
  4. Read instructions on the parsley package for how to space and sow seeds. Sow seeds ¼ inch deep and about 6 to 8 inches apart. For larger plants, sow seeds 8 to 10 inches apart. The separating and spacing of seedling plants is dependent on the size of the planter pot.
  5. Keep the soil moist so that seeds can germinate, and mulch so that the soil can conserve moisture. Note, it takes 2 to 4 weeks for seedlings to appear.
  6. Parsley leaves can begin to be harvested 70 to 90 days (10 to 13 weeks) approximately after planting. Plants can grow approximately 60 to 70 centimeters tall.
    - a. Parsley leaves can be harvested when the leaf stem has at least 3 segments. Note: Cut leaves from the outer stems of the plant when you need. This enables the inner leaves to grow.
    - b. Parsley can be stored fresh by putting the leaf stalks in water and placing them in the fridge. Another way to store parsley is by drying the leaves and this is done by cutting parsley at the base and hanging it in a well-ventilated, shady and warm place. Once parsley is dry, crumble it and store it in an airtight container.
- To grow dill indoors in a planter pot from seeds:
    1. Dill can be planted at nearly any time of the year, but plan to sow seeds at approximately the same time as other plants, to begin harvesting herbs around the same timeframe.
    2. To grow, dill requires full-sun exposure, with 6 to 8 hours of direct sunlight.
    3. Use the soil monitor to measure the soil. Dill requires a pH level that is around 6.0 to 7.5, meaning that the soil is slightly acidic and neutral.
    4. Read instructions on the dill package for how to space and sow seeds. Sow seeds about ¼ inch into the soil. The separating and spacing of seedling plants is dependent on the size of the planter pot.

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5. In 10 to 14 days seedlings will appear. Wait another 10 to 14 days for seedlings to produce a plant, then thin the plants to about 10 to 12 inches apart. The separating and spacing of seedling plants is dependent on the size of the planter pot.
6. Keep the soil moist and ensure that the soil doesn't dry out excessively.
7. Dill leaves can begin to be harvested 42 days (6 weeks) approximately after planting. Plants can grow approximately 45 centimeters tall.
  - a. As soon as the plant has 4 to 5 leaves, you can begin harvesting. Harvest older leaves first by pinching or cutting off the leaves. Or if you want to, you can harvest the entire stalks.
  - b. Dill can be stored by drying the leaves in a warm, well-ventilated place that is out of direct sunlight. Once totally dry, the leaves should be crumbled or crushed easily and stored in a jar.

## RESOURCES

- <https://www.canadiantire.ca/en.html> (Canadian Tire website)
- <https://www.almanac.com/gardening-tools-guide> (A Guide to Useful Gardening Tools)
- <https://www.almanac.com/growing-herbs-garden> (Growing Herbs in the Garden: Best Herbs for Beginners)
- <https://www.almanac.com/soil-preparation-how-do-you-prepare-garden-soil-planting> (Preparing the Soil)
- <https://www.almanac.com/plant/basil> (About Basil, How to Plant, Grow & Harvest)
- <https://mckenzieseeds.com/products/basil-sweet> (Sweet Basil Seeds)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GmoOvoS3v1g&t=7s> (How to Grow Basil from Seed in Containers)
- <https://www.almanac.com/plant/parsley> (About Parsley, How to Plant, Grow & Harvest)
- <https://mckenzieseeds.com/products/parsley-moss-curved> (Champion Moss Curled Parsley Seeds)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J7gtUiGay58> (How to Grow Parsley from Seed in Pots)

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- <https://www.almanac.com/plant/dill> (About Dill, How to Plant, Grow & Harvest)
- <https://mckenzieseeds.com/products/dill-fernleaf> (Fernleaf Dill Seeds)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VzDr9TNbC-c> (How to Grow Dill from Seed in Pots)

## SUPPORTS NEEDED

- Individuals may need hands-on support in preparing the soil, sowing the seeds, maintaining the plants, and harvesting the herbs.
- Individuals may also need motivational support via prompts to complete the gardening process.

## OTHER THINGS TO NOTE

1. A brief note about materials: It should be noted that not all tools are utilized at the same time. Please use the necessary tools at the required gardening times. Cost is based on Canadian Tire® pricing. For items that need to be purchased, use judgment in acquiring quality, yet cost-effective supplies. Tools and supplies such as planter pots and saucers can also be purchased in sets. Please support Canadian-based and local businesses if possible. Be mindful and careful of all tools and supplies, and pack them up when not in use to prevent any trips, falls or injuries.
2. The herbs noted above are some examples to grow indoors. If you have an allergy to, or do not like any of those herbs, there are plenty of other options of herbs to grow from seed form. The following three examples – basil, parsley and dill were chosen as they are very common and easy to plant, grow and maintain indoors from seed form in planter pots.
3. Gardening does require various activities of exercise including, but not limited to: standing stretching, bending and kneeling, among other movements. Be mindful of your body and limitations – do not go past your limits and potentially hurt yourself. Listen to your body!
4. Other good items to include are towel or paper towel to clean up in case you get sweaty or dirty.
5. Make gardening extra fun by:
  - a. Adding music to your experience
  - b. Including some friends to socialize with

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- c. A sense of adventure to learn and try something new and exciting!