



1811 2<sup>nd</sup> ST SW  
289-6068

7955 18<sup>th</sup> Ave NW  
289-0022

[www.sargentsgardens.com](http://www.sargentsgardens.com)

### **Growing Herbs Indoors**

The best chance for success with some of the culinary herbs indoors for the winter is to start new plants from seed in early August of the following: basil, chives, coriander, dill, parsley, marjoram, sage, summer savory and thyme. Plant in 4" peat pots which are sunk into the garden. (Make sure the entire peat pot is covered). Use a good light seed starting soil. Keep moist and fertilize with fish emulsion. When sprouts are 3" high, bring inside before first frost and place in a southern-exposure window.

Other culinary herbs for indoor, such as the mints, oregano and French tarragon, are best prepared by potting uprooted divisions after the last harvest. Be sure sprouts appear on top, set potted plants in a shady location for 2-3 weeks or bury pots in the ground to rest for 3-4 good hard frosts. While plants are in a transitional stage check for insects. If they need treatment use an insecticidal soap. Then bring indoors to a sunny window for winter enjoyment.

In order for herbs to make sufficient leaf growth during the winter, plants must have plenty of sunlight and a temperature maintained well above freezing at all times. Don't expect them to grow with the same vigor as they would outdoors, but they will grow well enough to provide you with fresh herbs that beat the flavor of dried herbs. Herbs while very tolerant in the garden are less tolerant than most house plants. They need perfect growing conditions. Here are some rules to observe when growing herbs indoors.

**LIGHT:** Most herbs indoors must have at least five hours of direct sunlight a day. The exception is mint, bay and thyme which prefer partial shade. Natural sunlight can be supplemented or replaced with fluorescent light. A two-tube, cool white fixture hung 6-8 inches above the plant and left on for 14-16 hours a day will keep herb plants healthy.

**TEMPERATURE:** Grow herb plants in cooler temperature. A daytime temperature of 65F and nighttime temperature of 55F° to 60F° are best. Make sure all plants are a fair distance from the windowpanes.

**SOIL:** Potted herbs appreciate a relatively rich soil mixture with good drainage. Use a good commercial potting mixture and provide a large enough pot for good root development.

**FERTILIZATION:** Care must be taken to give your plants enough food to keep them productive but not so much that they lose their fragrant oils. A feeding once a month with fish emulsion at about half-strength makes a good herb food.

**WATER:** When to water and how much to water are tricky questions to answer. It is

important to water herbs regularly, but they can be finicky. Water most herbs thoroughly when the surface soil is dry. In the case of mint, they need to be kept slightly moist. Always use room temperature water. Never allow soil to become waterlogged or pots to sit in water. These conditions bring on root rot and other fungal diseases. For this reason

Well drained potting soil is essential.

**AIR CIRCULATION:** Herbs are sensitive to dry stagnant air, which promotes fungal disease and insect infestation. On the other hand constant draft is deadly to herbs. Be sure to give plants plenty of space so air can circulate around and between plants. Don't let the foliage from one plant touch the neighboring plant. If the air is very dry, set the pots on a pebble-lined tray filled with water, making sure the pots are resting on the pebbles and not sitting in the water. This will add humidity to the air around the plant.