



Johnson's Garden Talk

Lawn and garden information for the friends and customers of Johnson's Garden Centers

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Find the Cure for Herb Fever

Emily Johnson, *Johnson's East*

Every spring, the warm sun shines down on the barren earth, animals come out of hibernation, birds sing, and people get the urge to participate in nature. Some people may call this spring fever, but I call it herb fever!

To cure your fever, be sure to plant herbs this spring. The symptoms will quickly fade away as the herbs tantalize your senses. The scent of herbs on a wafting breeze or in a potpourri mix brings relaxation to the soul. The wind through the leaves and stems lends a soft whisper to the ear. The taste of herbs paired with food create a variety of delicacies. And, we can't forget the sight of the beautiful colors and the touch of different textures found in an herb garden setting.

Herbs may be planted directly into the ground or planted in wooden half barrels, clay pots or strawberry jars. Almost any container is suitable provided it has good drainage. Even if you have a garden for your herbs, it is often convenient to have a pot or two of commonly used herbs near the door. Remember that containers will dry out faster and these herbs will need to be watered more often than herbs planted in the ground.

Herbs also grow well indoors in containers. Place them in a bright, sunny window and turn the pot regularly to get light to all parts of the plant.

Make sure that you pinch back new herbs to create a bushier, healthy plant. After the plants are a mature, healthy size you may begin to harvest your herbs. Fresh herbs are a delight to use in cooking. Dried herbs may be used for cooking or for making potpourri. You can also preserve herbs in oils or vinegars. Some herb gardeners use herbs to make decorations and gifts. The possibilities are endless!

When you visit Johnson's Garden Center this spring, don't forget the herbs! Our kind and knowledgeable staff will help you pick out herbs to help spice up your life ... and cure your herb fever. We may even have a few recipes up our sleeves.

Here is just a sampling of the herbs that will be available at various times throughout the year at Johnson's Garden Centers:

BASIL—Highly aromatic leaves used in salads, vinegars, pesto and pasta dishes

CHIVES—The leaves have a mild onion flavor used as a garnish or flavoring in salads, dips, soft cheeses, soups, eggs and sauces

CILANTRO—Use in curries, chutneys, sauces, salads, poultry, fish, vegetables and soups

DILL—Use leaves or seeds to flavor cheeses, rice, potatoes, eggs, sauces, potato salad, pickles and fish

MINT—Use to flavor teas, chocolates, desserts, salads and mint sauce

OREGANO—Use fresh leaves and sprigs in Italian and Mexican dishes, oil and vinegar marinades, with cheeses & tomatoes

PARSLEY—Use as a garnish or seasoning in fish and pasta dishes as well as with eggs, sauces, and cheeses

ROSEMARY—Use in meat dishes, especially with lamb, and to make potpourri

SAGE—Use in poultry stuffings, rich meat dishes, herb teas and to flavor cheese

TARRAGON—Use in sauces, egg and chicken dishes and to flavor vinegar

LEMON VERBENA—Leaves with strong lemon scent used in herb teas, desserts and potpourri