

12 Tips for a Great Herb Garden from Kettleby Herb Farms:

1. Pick a nice sunny location for your herb garden, preferably with 8-10 hours of sunlight. The soil should drain well, if you have clay type soil, add compost, peat moss and sand if necessary to break up the clay.
2. Make sure any plants or seeds you buy are labeled with the botanical name as well as the common name. Many plants have the same common name and if you are going to be eating or using these plants to make your own herbal products, you want to make sure you have the correct one.
3. Any perennial herbs can be planted outside anytime after May 1 as long as the soil is workable.(Not too wet)
4. No matter how tempting the weather appears....**Do not** plant your **Basil** outside until the long weekend in May, even the hint of a frost is enough to do this plant in.
5. Herbs can grow quite large, quite quickly...so leave space between your plants (10-12") when planting them. Remember you have to be able to harvest them as well. It's a good idea to contain spreading herbs such as mints in containers, sunk in the garden.
6. Keep newly planted herbs moist until established then only water if extremely dry. Most herbs tolerate dry conditions quite well.
7. Spend a little extra effort controlling the weeds in June and early July and you will be well rewarded with large healthy herbs.
8. Use only natural soil amendments and insect control products, remember you are going to be eating and using these plants.
9. When harvesting herbs such as Basil, Dill, Parsley, Rosemary, Tarragon etc. use sharp scissors or cutters and only harvest the top 1/3 of the plant. This ensures that you do not over harvest and kill the plant and it also promotes a nice bushy growth habit.
10. Be patient with your perennial herbs, they may not do much the first year, but wait until next season!
11. Keep a journal of your garden, just a small notebook will do. This is a great way to keep track of your herbs and learn more about them. Growth habit, flower colour, interesting foliage, too invasive etc. It's also great for keeping notes on how you used the herbs. This will prove invaluable next year, as you will have a pretty good idea of what you want more of and what you don't.
12. Take time to enjoy your garden! The sights, smells and tastes will amaze and inspire you.