



# Nicholson's Herb Farm

Dear Reader,

Welcome to our 2010 catalogue of culinary, aromatic and medicinal herbs for sale by mail order. If you are local to Cambridgeshire you can also find us at some farmers' markets in the area. Further details of these can be found on our website [www.nicholsonsherbfarm.co.uk/buy-herb-events](http://www.nicholsonsherbfarm.co.uk/buy-herb-events).

We hope that our catalogue contains something for everyone. Some herbs have a mind boggling number of cultivars; far too many for us to be able to offer every one. In those circumstances we have tried to ensure that each one we have included has earned its place, offering something that bit different be it in habit, hardiness, taste, leaf or flower colour.

We have also put together a number of themed herb collections which are listed towards the end of the catalogue. These include Nine for Newbies (an ideal starter collection) Get Stuffed! (a selection of herbs for stuffing), Full of Eastern Promise (especially for connoisseurs of Eastern cuisine) and Bee Happy (nectar rich herbs especially for bees). Please take a look – there are eight in total. These should help you if you are new to herbs or if you are just too busy to browse through the entire herb selection. They also make great gifts which can be delivered straight to the recipient with a personalised gift card.

**NEW for 2010** - This season we have added a small selection of medicinal herbs to our catalogue. We hope that these will prove popular and look forward to expanding the range in the coming years.

We have also extended our culinary herb range and, to complement this, have included 3 baby leaf salad mixes and some carefully chosen, easy to grow, vegetable/salad plants including a yellow cherry tomato, baby cucumbers and a highly decorative French bean all of which will grow happily in containers.

And finally, if you feel like growing your own, why not take a look at our range of culinary herb seeds, available all year round.

Please take a moment to look at our website where you can see full colour photographs of the herbs on offer and place your order online. You will also be able see and buy all of the other herbal related products which we have to offer, including our gift vouchers which are available in multiples of £5 or £10. These make great presents and have no expiry date. Once you've finished shopping why not have a browse through our information pages where you can find Herb of the Month and herb related articles and recipes? You can even subscribe to our newsletter and get the latest news and information delivered directly to your inbox. We promise not to share your details or bombard your inbox – the newsletter is sent out once a month.

We very much hope that you like our catalogue and website and, if you are not already, would love to count you as one of our customers in the near future. To those of you who have shopped with us before, thank you for your past custom and we hope to see you again in 2010.

John and Rhonda Sayer

**AGRIMONY** (*Agrimonia eupatoria*) P. Ht 30-60cm. Sometimes known as Church Steeples, agrimony has upright stems and downy leaves which are followed by long spikes of faintly scented yellow flowers in summer. The flowers are followed by bristly fruits. A native plant, agrimony was an important medicinal herb in Anglo Saxon times and is still used in some medicines today. This herb plant has adapted well to cultivation and looks good in both the border or wild flower meadows.

Hardy. Prefers well drained soil in sun but will tolerate dry and alkaline conditions.

**ALECOST (COSTMARY)** (*Tanacetum balsamita*) P. Ht 60-90cm. Alecost has oblong, silver-green mint scented leaves which are followed by clusters of daisy-like flowers on long stalks in late summer. Although historically used for various medicinal purposes it is not used in modern medicines. Dried leaves are aromatic though and may be added to pot pourri.

Hardy. Prefers well drained soil in full sun.

**ANGELICA** (*Angelica archangelica*) Bi. Ht 1-2.5m. Stately and robust, angelica has thick hollow stems and umbels of sweetly scented green-white flowers in early summer of the second year. It is a striking herb which makes a good specimen plant. Young leaves can be used in salads. Young stems can be candied, added to marmalade or cooked with rhubarb and other tart fruits and berries to enhance their flavour and reduce acidity. The seeds can be baked in bread or biscuits. Dried leaves and seeds can be added to pot pourri.

Hardy. Tolerates most conditions but prefers moist, rich (but not too heavy) soil in a shady position. Self seeds freely. Attractive to hoverflies.

**ANISE HYSSOP** (*Agastache foeniculum*) P. Ht 60-90cm. A beautiful and robust herb with anise scented leaves and bold spikes of light purple flowers all summer. The leaves can be added to drinks or salads or used to flavour pork and other meat dishes. Fresh or dried leaves can be used to make a refreshing tea.

Anise Hyssop is a good long flowering border herb. It is an excellent herb for bee keepers as it is an especially rich source of nectar during the flowering period. It is also attractive to birds and butterflies.

Frost Hardy to -6. Protect young plants from frost. Prefers rich moist soil in full sun.

## BASIL

With the exception of African Basil which is a tender perennial, all of the basil plants we sell are tender annuals. They should all be placed in a warm and sheltered position after the risk of frost has passed. Basil prefers well drained, moist, medium rich soil and full sun. It makes an excellent container plant and many cultivars have very attractive foliage making them a good choice for the ornamental garden as well as for the culinary one. To develop the best flavour they should be kept outside in hot dry weather. Whilst fresh basil leaves are stronger than dried leaves, always add towards the end of cooking to ensure that the flavour is not lost.

Basil plants are available from May to August.

**BASIL, AFRICAN** (*Ocimum 'African Blue'*) P. Ht 60-90cm. A very attractive herb with blue/purple tinted dark green leaves and long, impressive pink flowers throughout summer. Not as strong in flavour as the annual varieties but is nevertheless a useful culinary herb.

**BASIL, BUSH** (*Ocimum minimum*) A. Ht 15-30cm. A dwarf variety which is compact and bushy with very small pungent leaves and tiny white flowers in summer. Use in Mediterranean dishes. Particularly nice with tomato salad and cheese dishes.

**BASIL, CINNAMON** (*Ocimum basilicum* 'Cinnamon'). A. Ht 45-75cm. A Mexican basil with a distinctive cinnamon like aroma and clusters of small pink flowers in summer. Good for stir fry dishes.

**BASIL, NEOPOLITANA** (*Ocimum basilicum* 'Napolitano'). A. Ht 20-60cm. Also known as lettuce leaf basil. A robust basil with deeply curled large bright green leaves with white flowers in summer. Its sweet flavour makes it ideal for using salads. It is also good for making pesto, oil and for use in pasta sauces.

**BASIL, RED RUBIN** (*Ocimum basilicum* var. *purpurascens* 'Red Rubin'). A. Ht 23cm. A very attractive and highly aromatic basil with deep purple leaves and pink flowers. The leaves can be used in sauces, salads and pasta dishes.

**BASIL, SWEET** (*Ocimum basilicum*) A. Ht 20-60cm. A highly aromatic basil with bright green leaves and small white flowers from summer to mid-autumn. Well known for the unique flavour it gives to tomato and pasta dishes. It can also be used to make pesto sauce.

**BASIL, THAI** (*Ocimum basilicum* 'Horapha Nanum') A. Ht 30 cm. Thai basil has attractive, aniseed scented leaves with purple stems and flower shoots. Clusters of small purple flowers follow in summer. An essential basil for Thai cuisine.

**BAY** (*Laurus nobilis*) P. Ht 3-10m. An evergreen shrub or tree with dark green oval leaves and creamy yellow flower clusters in spring. A first rate culinary herb. Fresh or dried leaves are ideal for stews and casseroles or flavouring marinades. A good container plant.

Hardy. Likes fertile, reasonably moist but free draining soil in a sunny, sheltered position.

**BEAN, DWARF FRENCH** (*Phaseolus vulgaris*, Borlotto Suprema). An attractive dwarf French bean with decorative red and buff pods and beans. Excellent for containers. Plant out in early June in a sheltered spot after all chance of frost has passed. Ensure that the plant is well watered during and after flowering as moist roots are essential to ensure the maximum pod development.

A second harvest may be obtained if plants are fed with a liquid fertiliser after the first harvest. Pods are ready when the bean snaps easily when bent and before pods start to bulge. If haricot (dried) beans are required leave the pods to mature on the plant and then hang inside to dry until they become brittle and begin to split.

**BERGAMOT, RED** (*Monarda didyma*) P. Ht 40cm-1.2m. A colourful herb with strongly scented leaves and large deep scarlet flowers which bloom over a long period in summer. The leaves can be added to fruit drinks or made into a tea to give an Earl Grey flavour. Fresh flowers can be added to salads. In addition, bergamot's dried flowers are invaluable in pot pourri for their deep red colour and strong citrus scent. Spectacular when planted en masse and very attractive to bees.

Hardy. Prefers humus rich damp soil and partial shade but tolerates sun if kept moist.

**BETONY, BISHOPSWORT** (*Stachys officinalis*) P. Ht 15-60cm. A mat forming herb with hairy stems and dark green, regularly toothed oval leaves. Attractive spikes of magenta, pink and sometimes white flowers follow in summer. The ancient Egyptians endowed this herb plant with magical powers and it was an important medicinal and magical herb in Anglo Saxon times. Betony is a plant equally at home in a border or a wild flower meadow.

Hardy. Prefers well drained soil in sun or partial shade.

**BORAGE** (*Borago officinalis*) A. Ht 30cm-1m. With leaves which have the faint flavour of cucumber borage has beautiful intense blue star shaped flowers from early summer to mid autumn. Fresh leaves and flowers can be added to salads and cold drinks. The leaves can be made into a tea and flowers can be crystallised. Borage is very attractive to bees and is reputed to increase the disease resistance of neighbouring plants to harmful insects.

Hardy. Grows in any soil but prefers a sunny position. Self seeds readily.

**CAUTION:** The fresh leaves can cause skin irritation and eating excessive amounts may cause liver damage.

**BUGLE, BRONZE** (*Ajuga reptans* 'Atropurpurea') P. Ht 10-30cm. An evergreen perennial with very attractive dark purple brown foliage and spikes of deep blue, occasionally pink or white flowers in spring and early summer. This herb makes an excellent garden plant as ground cover, at the front of borders or mixed with wild flowers. Bronze bugle looks particularly effective planted with white variegated herbs or silver foliage plants. *Ajuga reptans* is an old wound herb.

Hardy. Prefers moisture retentive soil in sun or shade.

**CARAWAY** (*Carum carvi*) Bi. Ht 45-60cm. Caraway has attractive bright green feathery foliage which grows to approximately 20cm in the first year and up to 60cm in the second year. In early summer of the second year the foliage is joined by umbels of delicate creamy white flowers which are very pretty. Caraway leaves have a mild aniseed flavour and can be used in soups and salads but this herb is perhaps best known for its seeds which have a strong, distinctive flavour and can be used sparingly in cakes and savoury dishes.

Hardy. Likes well drained soil. For the best flavour grow in full sun.

**CATMINT** (*Nepeta x faassennii*) P. Ht 45-60cm. A farm favourite, catmint has small blue-grey aromatic leaves with masses of small wonderfully coloured lavender blue flowers in summer. The leaves can be dried for pot pourri. The scent of catmint is adored by cats and bees alike.

Hardy. Prefers well drained soil in a sunny position.

**CATNEP** (*Nepeta cataria*) P. Ht 30cm-1m. The traditional herbal catmint, catnep has aromatic oval grey-green leaves with clusters of pinkish white flowers throughout the summer. The leaves can be used to make a tea. The scent is adored by cats and bees alike.

Hardy. Prefers moist soil in a sunny position or partial shade.

**CELERY LEAF, WILD CELERY** (*Apium graveolens*) Bi. Ht 30cm-1m. With grooved stems and fresh green leaves, all parts of this herb plant have a strong smell of celery. Umbels of tiny green white flowers appear in the summer of the second year followed by small ridged seeds. Leaves are excellent added to salads or lightly cooked in soups and stews.

Hardy. Prefers well drained soil in full sun.

**CHAMOMILE, ROMAN** (*Chamaemelum nobile*) P. Ht 15cm (foliage) 30cm (flowers). A mat forming evergreen perennial with finely divided sweet smelling leaves and long stalked daisy like flowers in summer. Chamomile makes attractive creeping ground cover. Its flowers can be used to make tea. Dried flowers can be used in pot pourri or sleep pillows.

A good companion plant, chamomile is said to improve the health, yield and flowers of other plants. It is also attractive to beneficial hoverflies. Hardy. Prefers light, sandy soil in a sunny situation.

**CHERVIL** (*Anthriscus cerefolium*) A. Ht 30-60cm. Chervil's attractive, light green fern-like leaves have a delicate aniseed flavour and are followed by pretty white flowers. The leaves complement omelettes, soups, fish and vegetable dishes. Chervil also brings out the flavour of other herbs. For a classic 'fines herbes' add to parsley, tarragon and chives. The leaves are best used raw or added towards the end of cooking to preserve the flavour.

Hardy. Prefers moist, light soil in partial shade.

**CHICORY** (*Cicorium intybus*) P. Ht 1-1.5m. Chicory has oval, toothed leaves with striking clear azure-blue flowers from mid-summer to autumn. Fresh leaves and flowers can be added to salads. The roots can be dried and used as a coffee substitute.

An attractive herb which looks best grown up a trellis or other support.

Hardy. Prefers humus-rich but well drained soil in an open and sunny spot.

**CHIVES** (*Allium schoenoprasum*). P. Ht 30cm. A clump forming herb with slender bulbs, cylindrical hollow leaves and pretty pink to purple globe shaped flowers in late spring or early summer. The leaves and flowers have a mild onion flavour. Fresh leaves can be snipped into salads or used for butter, sauces, soups and vegetable, egg or cheese dishes.

Chives make excellent companion plants. They deter carrot root fly and help to prevent black spot on roses and scab on apples. They also help to prevent leaf curl on trees, particularly peaches. The flowers are attractive to bees.

Hardy. Tolerates most soil conditions but prefers rich, moist soil and a sunny position. For culinary use it is preferable to prevent flowering by cutting off flower buds. This will encourage leafy growth.

**CHIVES, GARLIC** (*Allium tuberosum*). P. Ht 60cm. A clump forming herb with flattened leaves, rather than the cylindrical hollow leaves of ordinary chives. Garlic chives have exceptionally pretty white star shaped flowers in summer. The leaves have a mild garlic flavour. Use the leaves as for ordinary chives.

Hardy. Tolerates most soil conditions but prefers rich, moist soil and a sunny position. For culinary use it is preferable to prevent flowering by cutting off flower buds. This will encourage leafy growth.

**CORIANDER** (*Coriandrum sativum*) A. Ht 60cm. An extremely attractive, erect herb with aromatic leaves and white to purple flowers in summer. The flowers are followed by pale brown fruits which have a fruity scent when ripe. The leaves have their best flavour before flowering and are used in Middle Eastern and Indian cuisine. Dried seeds can be used in sweet dishes, breads, cakes, curries, chutneys and pickles and crushed seeds can be added to pot pourri.

Coriander is attractive to hoverflies and drone flies.

Hardy. Likes well drained, fertile soil in a sunny position. Dislikes being transplanted. Keep watered to prevent prematurely running to seed.

**COWSLIP** (*Primula veris* AGM) P. Ht 30cm. A clump forming herb plant with mid-green oblong leaves and sweetly scented golden bell shaped flowers in spring.

Historically the flowers were used to make wine and can also be used to make tea. Fresh flowers look attractive in salads or candied for use on cakes and desserts.

Hardy. Prefers dry soil in full sun or partial shade.

**CUCUMBER, BABY** (*Cucumis sativus*, Green Fingers). An outdoor baby cucumber with smooth fruit 10-12 cm long. These cucumbers have a good flavour and their size makes them perfect for lunchboxes.

Cucumbers require a sunny spot protected from strong winds. If you have lots of space they can be grown along the ground but for best results grow up a trellis or wire fence. Vines have tendrils and so do not need to be tied in.

Grow in well drained humus rich soil and remember to keep the soil moist. Water around the plants rather than over them. Once the first fruits have started to swell feed with a liquid fertiliser - tomato feed is fine. Do not remove the male flowers.

Plant out in early June when all danger of frost has passed.

**CUMIN** (*Cuminum cyminum*) A. Ht 30-60cm . A favourite of the ancient Romans and Greeks, cumin has dark green divided leaves with umbels of tiny white or pink flowers in summer followed by bristly oval seeds. Cumin has a pungent, aromatic and rather bitter taste and is an essential ingredient in many curries and spicy dishes. Dried ground seeds can be used in spice mixtures, for instance, garam masala or seeds may be roasted and added to meat dishes, such as lamb.

Half Hardy. Prefers well drained soil in a sunny position.

**DILL** (*Anethum graveolens*) A. Ht 60cm-1m. A very decorative herb, dill has a long stem with lacy grey-green leaves followed by umbels of yellow flowers in summer. Use the leaves and ripe seeds to flavour salads, fish, seafood and egg dishes. The seeds can also be used in vinegars and pickles or to make tea.

Hardy. Likes fertile, well drained soil in full sun. Dill needs adequate water and is prone to bolt in poor soil. Avoid planting too near to fennel to avoid cross pollination.

**ECHINACEA** (*Echinacea purpurea*) P. Ht 1.2m ~ Hardy. A well known garden plant and medicinal herb, echinacea has oval leaves with purplish-pink, honey scented, daisy-like flowers which have distinctive conical orange-brown centres. A native of America, it was used by native Americans to treat wounds and is still used in many commercial preparations today. An excellent herb plant for the back of the border for late summer and autumn colour. Dead head to encourage a second flowering.

Prefers rich, well drained soil in full sun.

**ELECAMPANE** (*Inula helenium*) P. Ht 3m. A very tall stately plant with large leaves and yellow daisy-like flowers from mid-summer to mid-autumn. Elecampane has been used as a medicinal herb since ancient times. It is also a traditional dye plant; the flowers make a yellow dye and the roots a blue one. A superb herb for providing structure and height to the herb garden or borders. It self seeds freely so cut off seed heads before the seeds are ripe. Seed heads are attractive and can be used to make dried winter decorations. If you don't mind a bit of self seeding leave the seed heads in place as they provide useful seeds for birds.

Hardy. Prefers moist, well drained soil in full sun.

**EVENING PRIMROSE** (*Oenothera biennis*) Bi. Ht 30cm-1.5m. A tall plant with large yellow trumpet shaped flowers on spikes in the second summer. The flowers have a wonderfully intense scent. Although, as its name suggests, the plant mainly opens its flowers in the evening they may be open during the day, particularly in dull weather. The fragrance is most noticeable in the evening. The medicinal uses of this herb plant are a relatively recent discovery, following research in the 1980s. It's oil is now widely used for these purposes.

Hardy. Tolerates dry soil including sand. Prefers full sun.

**FENNEL** (*Foeniculum vulgare*) P. Ht 1.5-2m. A tall, handsome herb with soft green feathery leaves and large umbels of yellow flowers in late summer. The whole plant has an anise flavour. Both the leaves and seeds are used in a variety of dishes including fish, stir fry and rice dishes, pork and salads. A tea can be made from crushed seeds.

Fennel is attractive to bees, hoverflies and other insects. The seeds provide food for seed eating birds.

Hardy. Prefers a fertile well drained soil in a sunny position. Avoid planting too near to dill to avoid cross pollination.

**FENNEL, BRONZE** (*Foeniculum vulgare* 'Purpureum') P. Ht 1.5-2m. A tall, handsome herb with striking red-brown feathery leaves and large umbels of yellow flowers in late summer. The whole plant has an anise flavour. Both the leaves and seeds are used in a variety of dishes including fish, pork and salads.

Fennel is attractive to bees, hoverflies and other insects. The seeds provide food for seed eating birds.

Hardy. Prefers a fertile well drained soil in a sunny position. Avoid planting too near to dill to avoid cross pollination.

**FEVERFEW** (*Tanacetum parthenium*) P. Ht 24cm. Feverfew is a strong smelling herb with mid-green leaves and clusters of daisy-like flowers in summer through to early autumn. An extremely potent herb, medicinally Feverfew has been the subject of much research since the 1970s. Self seeds easily. A good plant for the border.

Hardy. Prefers well drained to dry soil in full sun. Tolerates stony soil.

**GOAT'S RUE** (*Galega officinalis*) P. Ht 1-1.5m A vigorous, bushy perennial with attractive leaves and pretty spikes of lavender to white pea flowers in summer. Best grown in a natural situation with plenty of space. Cut back after flowering to prevent seeds forming. This will encourage new growth and probably a second flush of flowers. Goat's Rue is little used today as a medicinal herb but used to be given for the plague.

Hardy. Prefers rich, moisture retaining soil in full sun or partial shade.

**GOOD KING HENRY** (*Chenopodium bonus-henricus*). P. Ht 60cm. Mid green leaves are followed by greenish yellow flower spikes in spring. The flower spikes can be steamed. The young leaves should be treated as spinach or used in casseroles, stuffings or soups. Young shoots can be treated like asparagus. Good King Henry is rich in vitamins C, B, iron and calcium.

Hardy. This herb flourishes in poor soil in sun or shade. It is extremely invasive and best grown in a pot.

**HEARTSEASE (WILD PANSY)** (*Viola tricolour*) P. Ht up to 30cm. Heartsease has mid-green toothed leaves which are heart shaped followed by small tricoloured pansy flowers from spring to early autumn. Flowers are edible and can be sprinkled in salads or candied and used on cakes and desserts. This herb plant will thrive in rock gardens, gravel or sandy areas although is equally at home in the border.

Hardy. Prefers full sun although tolerates partial shade.

**HERB ROBERT** (*Geranium robertianum*) A/Bi. Ht 30cm. Herb Robert, sometimes called red robin, has attractive, fine cut red-tinged leaves with deep pink flowers from early summer to late autumn. The foliage makes an attractive backdrop to most plants but a particularly attractive look can be created by planting in large drifts.

In the Middle Ages this herb plant was deemed a magic herb; it is still used in folk medicine.

Hardy. Prefers moisture retaining soil but is happy in shade, partial shade or full sun. Self seeds freely.

**HORSERADISH** (*Armoracia rusticana*) P. Ht 60cm. An upright herb with a thick branched tap-root. Horseradish has bright green leaves with tiny white flowers in late spring or early summer. Grated raw root can be used to make a creamy sauce or can be used to flavour pickles, dips and coleslaw. The young leaves have a milder flavour than the root and can be added to salads or fish patés.

Hardy. Any soil and position. This herb is very invasive and is best grown in a dustbin.

**HYSSOP** (*Hyssopus officinalis*) P. Ht 60-90cm. An ancient herb which forms a neat, upright shrub. It has small, narrow, aromatic leaves with dense spikes of glorious deep blue flowers. Fresh leaves can be added sparingly to stews or used with fatty fish and meat. The flowers can be sprinkled into salads. Dried flowers can be used to make a tea (good with honey).

Hyssop looks good grown as a small hedge and is an excellent herb for attracting bees and butterflies. It is also a good companion plant and thought generally beneficial to grapevines as well as helping to repel cabbage white butterflies.

Hardy. Prefers well drained soil in a sunny position. Prune hard in spring to prevent the plant from becoming straggly.

**LADY'S MANTLE** (*Alchemilla mollis*) P. Ht 40-50cm. This herb plant has attractive soft green pleated leaves and small greenish yellow flowers from mid to late summer. Grown more for its foliage than its flowers this herb makes excellent ground cover. Lady's Mantle was an important medicinal herb in the 16th century.

Hardy. Prefers moist, well drained soil in sun or partial shade.

## LAVENDER

Thought of primarily as an aromatic herb and perfect for sleep pillows, scented sachets and pot pourri, the culinary uses of lavender are often overlooked. In fact the fresh leaves and flowers of these versatile herbs can be added to salads, soups and stews. The flowers can also be used to flavour sugar for cakes, ice cream, biscuits and desserts or added to vinegar, marmalade, honey or jam.

All lavenders are very attractive to bees. Lavender is evergreen and unless specifically stated all those listed below are hardy. They have each been selected for their differing characteristics. They require light free-draining soil and an open, sunny situation.

Lavenders with the RHS Award of Garden Merit have the letters AGM beside them.

**LAVENDER, FRENCH 'MADRID'** (*Lavandula stoechas* 'Madrid') P. Ht 40cm. A hardy French lavender with small, delicate, silvery-green aromatic leaves and pretty pink two tone flowers. A compact cultivar with a long flowering season. Ideal for pots.

**LAVENDER, HIDCOTE** (*Lavandula angustifolia* 'Hidcote') P. Ht 30-60 cm. A very popular lavender for hedging with a compact, erect habit. Grey, aromatic leaves with short spikes of deep violet flowers in early summer. (AGM)

**LAVENDER, LODDON PINK** (*Lavandula angustifolia* 'Loddon Pink'). P. Ht to 90cm. A medium sized cultivar which has a tidy habit and sprays of soft pink flowers above tight green foliage. Ideal for hedging or planting in a mixed bed. (AGM)

**LAVENDER, MUNSTEAD** (*Lavandula angustifolia* 'Munstead') P. Ht 30-45 cm. A compact, early flowering cultivar with aromatic grey foliage and strongly scented loose spikes of mid blue flowers. Popular for neat border hedging.

**LEMON BALM** (*Melissa officinalis*) P. Ht 30-80cm. Lemon balm is an undemanding, neat, shrubby herb with lemon scented leaves and small cream flowers in summer. The leaves can be used to add flavour to chicken, game and fish, to make stuffing or added soups, sauces, salads, deserts and drinks. The leaves make a calming tea. A good bee plant.

Hardy. Any soil, in sun or partial shade. Spreads and self seeds readily.

**LEMON BALM, VARIEGATED** – As above except that foliage has an attractive gold splash.

**LEMON GRASS** (*Cymbopogon citratus*) P. Ht to 1.5m. A must for Eastern cuisine, lemon grass is a tall clump-forming herb with grass-like leaves which have a strong lemon scent. It rarely flowers in cooler regions. The leaves can be used to make tea. The young white stems and leaf bases are more commonly used in stir fry dishes and in Thai, Asian and Indian cooking.

Tender. Prefers fertile, well drained soil and plenty of moisture. This herb will become dormant in winter and will require protection in a conservatory or warm greenhouse. Keep water to a minimum during this period.

**LEMON VERBENA** (*Aloysia triphylla*) Shrub. Ht up to 3m. A woody deciduous shrub with amazingly lemon-scented pointed leaves and tiny pale lilac to white flowers in summer. The leaves, fresh or dry make a refreshing tea. They can also be added to jams, jellies, ice creams, sauces and savoury stuffings. As the leaves retain their strong lemon fragrance for several years when dried they are an ideal addition to pot pourri.

A half hardy shrub lemon verbena will require some winter protection. It prefers a light, well drained soil in a sunny sheltered position. New leaves do not appear until late spring/early summer. Cut back hard in spring; leaves will regenerate from old wood.

**LESSER CALAMINT** (*Calamintha nepeta*) P. Ht 30cm. A small bushy plant with peppermint scented leaves and loose clusters of pretty pale lilac to white flowers over a long period in summer. A herb used in Medieval times but little used by practitioners today. Calamint is a plant best grown at the front of the border to take full advantage of its scent.

Hardy. Tolerates most well drained soils in full sun or partial shade.

**LOVAGE** (*Levisticum officinale*) P. Ht 2m. A large celery-scented herb with hollow stems and tiny yellow-green flowers in summer which are followed by tiny aromatic seeds. Add young leaves to salads, soups and sauces or to flavour new potatoes or stews. The seeds can be used in biscuits and bread and the stalks can be candied. Lovage seeds are a good source of food for seed eating birds.

Hardy. A vigorous spreader. Will die down completely during the winter. Tolerates most soils but prefers rich, moist, well drained soil in sun or partial shade.

**MARIGOLD, POT** (*Calendula officinalis*) A. Ht 50-70cm. A bushy, aromatic, long lived annual with showy bright orange or yellow daisy like flowers throughout summer. Fresh or dried petals can be used as a garnish for salads, to colour cakes or custards and in rice dishes as a substitute for saffron. Whole dried flowers or petals add colour to pot pourri.

Hardy. Tolerates any soil in a sunny situation. Keep dead heading to prolong flowering period.

**MARJORAM, GOLDEN** (*Origanum vulgare* 'Aureum') P. Ht 45-60 cm. A bushy herb with attractive yellow-green aromatic leaves followed by clusters of tiny pink-lavender flowers in summer. Fresh or dried leaves can be added to meat or vegetables. An important herb in Italian, Greek and Mexican dishes. The leaves and flower tops can be used to make a tea.

The flowers are attractive to bees and butterflies and the seeds provide a good source of food for seed eating birds.

Hardy. Prefers light, well drained soil in a sunny position (although leaves will scorch in full sun). Dislikes being water logged in winter.

**MARJORAM, SWEET** (*Origanum marjorana*) P. Ht 40-60cm. A shrubby herb with wiry red-brown stems and downy grey-green highly aromatic leaves. Tiny white flowers appear in summer. A superb culinary herb, Sweet Marjoram is considered to have the finest flavour for culinary uses which is more delicate than some others and is best used towards the end of cooking. The leaves and flowering sprigs are often used in Italian and Greek cooking. It can also be used in roasts and for barbecues. Dried flowering stems can be added to pot pourri.

Half Hardy. Plant in a very sheltered position or give protection in winter. Prefers well drained fertile soil (but not too dry) in full sun.

## MINT

There are many culinary mints which have attractive, scented foliage. This can be variegated, downy, crinkly or crisp and many bear very pretty flowers all of which are attractive to bees. Mint prefers fertile, well drained but moist or moisture-retaining soil in full sun or partial shade. It spreads readily although this can be controlled by planting in a sunken, bottomless pot.

**MINT, APPLE** (*Mentha suaveolens*) P. Ht 60cm-1m. Apple mint's oval leaves are soft, slightly furry and scented with apple. Pink to white flowers in summer. This mint has a subtle taste. Good for mint sauce and jelly and also for adding to vegetables and salads.

**MINT, BLACK PEPPERMINT** (*Mentha x piperita* black peppermint) P. Ht 45cm. A popular mint with very dark, peppermint scented leaves and pink/purple flowers from summer through to autumn. The leaves can be used in salads, with fish or cheese and can also be used to make a tea.

**MINT, CHOCOLATE** (*Mentha x piperita* citrate 'Chocolate') P. Ht 40cm. A compact and rich peppermint with dark brown/purple leaves and the smell of After Eight Mints. Purple flowers appear from summer through to autumn. The leaves can be used in tea, iced tea and salads and are also good in deserts.

**MINT, CURLY** (*Mentha spicata* var. *crispa*) P. Ht 60cm Bright green curly leaves with a spearmint scent are followed by small mauve flowers in summer. Use for mint sauce or jelly and stuffings. Add to vegetables and salads or use to flavour drinks.

**MINT, GINGER** (*Mentha x gracilis* 'Variegata') P. ht 30-90cm. A very attractive late variety which has golden/green variegated leaves with a ginger scent followed by mauve flowers. Add the leaves to salads or fruit salads. Good with tomato salad.

**MINT MOROCCAN** (*Mentha spicata* var. *crispa* 'Moroccan') P. Ht 40 cm. Mid-green leaves are followed by white flowers from summer to autumn. The leaves have an excellent spearmint flavour. Good for mint sauce, in salads or with potatoes. One of the best mints for mint tea.

**MINT, PINEAPPLE** (*Mentha suaveolens* 'Variegata') P. Ht 45-60cm. This mint has striking soft green and cream foliage followed by small white flowers from summer to autumn. The leaves have a slightly fruity scent and can be used as a garnish or in drinks.

**MINT, SPEARMINT (GARDEN MINT)** (*Mentha spicata*) P. Ht 30-60cm. The classic garden mint with mid green spearmint scented leaves followed by small mauve flower spikes in mid to late summer. The leaves have a good flavour for general culinary use in sauces, soups, salads, vegetable dishes, sweet dishes and drinks.

Hardy. Moist, reasonably rich soil. Partial shade. To control spread grow in sunken, bottomless pots.

**MIZUNA** (*Brasica rapa* var. *japonica*) A. Ht 18cm. Mizuna is an oriental vegetable with attractive dark green, glossy, serrated leaves with slender white stalks. The leaves have a mild mustard flavour and are ideal in salads and stir fry dishes. Looks good in flower beds and as an edging.

Half Hardy. Easy to grow in most soils in full sun or partial shade. Will over-winter well if kept under cover.

**NASTURTIUM** (*Tropaeolum majus*). A. Ht 30cm. One of the most colourful herbs and a popular garden flower, nasturtiums have bright orange and yellow flowers throughout the summer. Both the leaves and flowers are edible and can be used in salads (the leaves have a peppery taste). The seeds can be pickled as a substitute for capers or the flowers used to flavour vinegar.

A good companion plant, nasturtiums deter aphids, especially whitefly, squash bugs and woolly aphids. They also attract blackfly to themselves.

Hardy. Plant in relatively poor soil for the best production of flowers. Requires plenty of moisture.

**OREGANO, ACORN BANK** (*Origanum vulgare* 'Acorn Bank') P. Ht 45cm. This oregano has attractive, pointed, golden-greenish leaves followed by clusters of pretty tiny pink flowers in summer. Use the leaves in Greek, Italian and Mexican recipes. Both the leaves and flowers can be used to make tea. Oregano is attractive to bees and butterflies.

Hardy. Likes well drained soil in full sun.

**OREGANO, COUNTRY CREAM** (*Origanum vulgare* 'Country Cream') P. Ht 30-40cm. Country Cream has very attractive cream and green variegated leaves with masses of pretty pink flowers in summer which are loved by bees and butterflies. Use the leaves in Greek, Italian and Mexican recipes. Both the leaves and flowers can be used to make tea.

Hardy. Likes well drained soil in full sun.

**OREGANO, GREEK** (*Origanum vulgare* subsp. *Hirtum* 'Greek') P. Ht 45cm. The leaves of Greek Oregano have an excellent spicy hot flavour and are a must for all cooks. They are grey-green in colour, oval and slightly hairy. Clusters of small white flowers appear in summer. Use in Greek, Italian and Mexican recipes. Oregano is attractive to bees and butterflies.

Hardy. Likes well drained soil in full sun.

**OREGANO, HOT & SPICY** (*Origanum vulgare* 'Hot & Spicy') P. 40-60cm. Try it if you dare! A potent cultivar of Greek oregano with an intense aromatic flavour which is both peppery and strong. The leaves are dark green and slightly hairy followed by an abundance of white flowers in summer. Use with care in hot salsa and chilli dishes. Oregano is attractive to bees and butterflies.

Hardy. Likes well drained soil in full sun.

**PARSLEY, CURLED** (*Petroselinum crispum*) Bi. Ht 30-60cm. Curled parsley has distinctive bright green curly serrated leaves. Umbels of yellow green flowers follow in the second year. This herb is widely used as garnish or to flavour dressings, butters, sauces and stuffings. A good source of vitamins and iron.

Hardy. Prefer fertile, humus rich, moist (but well drained) soil in sun or partial shade. Parsley leaves coarsen in the second year so for culinary use it is best grown as an annual.

**PARSLEY, FRENCH** (*Petroselinum crispum* 'French') Bi. Ht 30-60cm. With a stronger flavour than curled parsley, French parsley has dark green serrated flat leaves and umbels of yellow green flowers in the second year. This herb is widely used as a garnish or to flavour dressings, butters, sauces and stuffing. A good source of vitamins and iron. Parsley leaves coarsen in the second year so for culinary use it is best grown as an annual.

Hardy. Fertile, humus rich, moist (but well drained) soil. Sun or partial shade.

**PEPPER, CHILI** (*Capsicum annum*, 'Purple Tiger'). An excellent chili which is ideal for containers. Purple Tiger has a compact and bushy habit with eye-catching purple and white variegated leaves. Fruits ripen from purple to red. Peppers require well drained fertile soil in a sunny sheltered location. Plant out late May if the weather is good or early June, once all risk of frost has passed. Plants require regular watering and feeding once the fruits begin to swell. A potassium rich feed, such as liquid tomato fertiliser is fine.

**PINK, CLOVE** (*Dianthus caryophyllus*) P. Ht 20-50cm. An evergreen perennial with grey green leaves and small deep pink to purple clove scented flowers in summer. Petals can be eaten in salads or used in puddings. Dried flowers can be used in pot pourri.

Hardy. Prefers light, well drained soil in a sunny position.

**POPPY, FIELD** (*Papaver rhoeas*) A. Ht 20-90cm. Also known as the Flanders poppy, this annual herb plant has upright stems and long stalked, mostly red, flowers. The flowers are short lived but planted en-masse they make a splendid show. Attractive seed heads follow. Use seeds, whole or ground, in pastries and meat dishes or, as they perhaps better known, on bread and in biscuits.

Hardy. Plant in well drained soil in full sun.

**WARNING:** All parts, except the seeds, are toxic if eaten.

**PRIMROSE** (*Primula officinalis*) P. Ht 5-25cm. A clump forming herb plant with bright green oblong leaves and pretty, pale yellow, scented flowers in late winter and spring. Primroses have a long history of use as medicinal herbs. They are also a good source of nectar for bees and butterflies.

Hardy. This plant grows in a wide range of situations including rock gardens, borders and watersides. It looks very attractive grown in a woodland setting.

**PURSLANE** (*Portulaca oleracea*) A. Ht 30cm. The succulent oval green leaves of purslane have the taste of mange-tout. They are followed by small yellow flowers in late summer. Both the stems and leaves can be eaten. A popular culinary herb in France it is used in sorrel soup to help reduce the acidity of the sorrel. Fresh leaves can be added to salads and soups. Purslane is a good source of vitamin C.

Half hardy. Prefers light well drained soil in a sunny spot. Plenty of water is required for good leaf development. Pick the leaves regularly from spring to stimulate new growth.

**PURSLANE, WINTER (MINER'S LETTUCE)** (*Claytonia perfoliata*) A. Ht 25cm. Also known as Miner's Lettuce, winter purslane has fleshy leaves followed by small white flowers in summer. The whole plant is edible. It is tough and resistant to cold and makes a useful winter or early spring salad herb. May also be grown as a cut and come again crop.

Frost hardy. Prefers partial shade.

**ROCKET, SALAD** (*Eruca vesicaria* subsp. *sativa*) A. Ht 60cm-1m. A very popular salad choice, rocket has oval, serrated mid-green leaves with cream, brown veined flowers from early spring to late summer. The leaves have distinctive peppery flavour. Both the leaves and flowers are delicious in salads although the leaves are at their best before the flowers appear. Nice too with parmesan cheese.

Frost hardy (to -5C). Rocket tolerates most soils and likes a sunny position. For maximum taste grow in hot, dry conditions.

## ROSEMARY

There are many rosemaries to choose from and many varying habits. Some have a neat, compact habit whilst others sprawl. Dwarf and prostrate varieties are also available. Flower colours also vary from exceptionally pale blue through to beautiful deep blues and also pink. All are evergreen with aromatic foliage. The rosemaries below have all been chosen for their differing characteristics.

Rosemary adds flavour to meat dishes, particularly lamb. It is a good all rounder - sprigs can be added to stews in winter or to the barbeque in summer. It also combines well with tomato based sauces, can be used for oils, vinegars and marinades or to make a tea. Leaves and flowers can be added to pot pourri and insect repellent sachets.

Rosemary is a native of the Mediterranean and likes a sunny, sheltered position in well drained soil. Although most rosemaries do tolerate cold conditions they are originally of Mediterranean origin and are not very hardy. A sunny, sheltered position will suit it best with well drained soil. To avoid plants becoming straggly prune hard after flowering, taking care not to cut back into old wood.

**ROSEMARY** (*Rosmarinus officinalis*) P. Ht up to 2m. An aromatic shrub with upright branches. The leaves are short, dark green and needle-shaped and are followed by small pale to dark blue flowers from early spring to early summer.

**ROSEMARY, BENENDEN BLUE** (*Rosmarinus officinalis* 'Benenden Blue') P. Ht 1m. A small-growing cultivar with a dense habit and beautiful shape. The leaves are short, dark green and needle-shaped and are followed by small medium blue flowers in spring and summer. An excellent choice for a container.

**ROSEMARY 'MISS JESSOP'S UPRIGHT'** (*Rosmarinus officinalis* 'Miss Jessopp's Upright') P. Ht up to 2m. An indispensable rosemary for confined spaces with a vigorous upright habit. Its leaves are short, dark green and needle shaped and are followed by exceptionally pale blue flowers from spring to summer.

**ROSEMARY, PINK** (*Rosmarinus officinalis* 'Roseus') P. Ht up to 2m. This rosemary has an upright habit. Its leaves are short, mid green and needle-shaped and are followed by small pale pink flowers from early spring to early summer.

**ROSEMARY, SEVERN SEA** (*Rosmarinus officinalis* 'Severn Sea') P. Ht 1m. This rosemary has a spreading, arching habit with short, dark green, needle shaped leaves and violet-blue flowers. An especially good rosemary for growing in containers or over walls.

**SAGE** (*Salvia officinalis*) P. Ht 60-70cm. A shrubby evergreen with aromatic grey-green leaves with blue/purple flowers in summer. A strongly flavoured herb which goes well with meat dishes, especially pork. Leaves can also be used in savoury stuffings or to make tea. The flowers can be used as a garnish.

Attractive to bees and butterflies.

Hardy. Prefers light, well drained soil in full sun. Prune in spring to keep in good shape or just after flowering. Do not cut back into old wood.

**SAGE, BLACKCURRANT** (*Salvia microphylla*) P. Ht up to 1.2m. Wonderfully blackcurrant scented leaves which are small, oval and mid-green are followed by stunning bright pink flowers in summer. The leaves can be used in salads and fruit salads.

Attractive to bees and butterflies.

Half hardy. Will require a sheltered frost free spot during winter. Prefers light, well drained soil in full sun.

**SAGE, BLACKCURRANT 'HOT LIPS'** (*Salvia microphylla* 'Hot Lips') P. Ht 60-70 cm. Wonderfully blackcurrant scented the leaves are small, oval and mid-green. Hot Lips is a variant of Blackcurrent Sage but with striking red and white flowers in summer. The leaves can be used in salads and fruit salads.

Attractive to bees and butterflies.

Half hardy. Will require a sheltered frost free spot during winter. Prefers light, well drained soil in full sun.

**SAGE, GOLDEN VARIEGATED** (*Salvia officinalis* 'Icterina') P. Ht 60-80cm. An evergreen sage grown for its attractive green and gold variegated foliage which provides interest in the herb garden. This sage rarely flowers (these are pale blue when it does). It goes well with meat dishes, especially pork. The leaves can also be used in savoury stuffings or to make tea.

Attractive to bees and butterflies.

Hardy. Prefers light, well drained soil in full sun. Prune in spring to keep in good shape or just after flowering. Do not cut back into old wood.

**SAGE, PAINTED** (*Salvia viridis* syn. *S. horminum*) A. Ht 45cm. Painted sage has small flowers but this is more than made up for by its striking brightly coloured pink or purple bracts which last all summer. The leaves are green, rough textured and aromatic and can be cooked or used raw in soups, salads, and cooked greens. The bracts and flowers can be added to salads.

Hardy. Prefers light, well drained soil in full sun.

**SAGE, PINEAPPLE** (*Salvia elegans* 'Scarlet Pineapple') P. Ht 90cm. Pineapple sage provides excellent late colour with bright red flowers from autumn. Its oval, pointed green leaves have a distinctive pineapple scent. The leaves can be used in salads and fruit salads, with meat dishes (particularly pork) or to make tea. They also add a nice flavour to cakes.

Attractive to bees and butterflies.

Half hardy. Treat as a house or conservatory plant during the winter months. Prefers light, well drained soil in full sun. Keep moist.

**SAGE, PURPLE** (*Salvia officinalis Purpurascens*) P. Ht 60-70 cm. An attractive evergreen sage with soft textured dusky purple leaves followed by mauve-blue flowers in summer. The leaves have a milder flavour than some other sages and go well with vegetable and pasta dishes. They can also be used for stuffing or for tea.

Attractive to bees and butterflies.

Hardy. Prefers light, well drained soil in full sun. Prune in spring to keep in good shape or just after flowering. Do not cut back into old wood.

**SAGE, TRICOLOUR** (*Salvia officinalis* 'Tricolor') P. Ht 40cm A pretty aromatic variegated sage with pink, cream and green leaves and blue flowers in summer. The leaves go well with meat dishes, especially pork. They can also be used in savoury stuffings or to make tea.

Attractive to bees and butterflies.

Hardy. Prefers light, well drained soil in full sun. Dislikes cold waterlogged soil. Prune in spring to keep in good shape or just after flowering. Do not cut back into old wood.

**SALAD BURNET** (*Sanguisorba minor*) P. Ht up to 60cm. An evergreen perennial herb plant with soft toothed leaves and tiny magenta flowers in summer. The leaves have a cucumber flavour and make a cool and attractive addition to salads or sauces. Try mixing with other fresh herbs, such as chives and parsley and adding to mayonnaise to make a refreshing dip. To ensure a constant supply of young leaves remove the flowers as they appear.

Hardy. Prefers moist, fertile soil in sun or partial shade.

**SALAD LEAF MIX "BRIGHT & SPICY"** A. Ht 12-15cm. A mix of different salad leaves which have similar growth rates, intended to provide interesting baby leaf salads. Harvest when leaves are approximately 12-15cm tall. Our Bright & Spicy mix contains:

Pak choi, Golden Yellow, Pak choi, Canton White, Tatsoi, Greek Cress, Mizuna, Mustard, Red Frills & Mustard, Red Zest.

Hardy. Harvest leaves directly from the pot or plant out in sun or partial shade.

**SALAD LEAF MIX "TRADITIONAL"** A. Ht 12-15cm. A mix of different salad leaves which have similar growth rates, intended to provide interesting baby leaf salads. Harvest when leaves are approximately 12-15cm tall. Our Traditional mix contains:

Lettuce, Red Batavia, Lettuce, Green Batavia, Lettuce, Cerbiatta, Endive Soldata, Rocket Dentellata, Greek Cress & Mizuna.

Hardy. Harvest leaves directly from the pot or plant out in sun or partial shade.

**SALAD LEAF MIX "TUSCAN"** A. Ht 12-15cm. A mix of different salad leaves which have similar growth rates, intended to provide interesting baby leaf salads. Harvest when leaves are approximately 12-15cm tall. Our Tuscan mix contains:

Chicory Italico Rosso, Rocket Dentellata, Lettuce, Lollo Rossa, Lettuce, Catalogna Cerbiata & Kale, Nero de Toscana

Hardy. Harvest leaves directly from the pot or plant out in sun or partial shade.

**SAVORY, SUMMER** (*Satureja hortensis*) A. Ht 38-40cm. A small bushy herb with single, widely branched stems with aromatic oval pointed leaves. Its small white flowers are tinged with pink in summer. Savory adds flavour to stuffings and sauces and is good for flavouring pulses, especially broad beans.

A good companion plant, grow near to broad beans to help deter blackfly.

Hardy. Prefers well drained soil in full sun.

**SAVORY, WINTER** (*Satureja montana*) P. Ht 30-40cm. A semi-evergreen clump forming herb which has dark green pungent leaves and small white flowers tinged with pink in summer. Winter savory has a similar flavour to summer savory, although slightly spicier. The leaves add flavour to stuffings and sauce and are good for flavouring pulses, especially broad beans.

Hardy. Prefers well drained soil in full sun.

**SORREL** (*Rumex acetosa*) P. Ht 60cm-1.2m. This is the large or broad leaved form which has pale green stems and thick lance shaped green leaves. Small, inconspicuous greenish brown flowers appear in spikes from early summer. The leaves have a distinctive lemony flavour. Young leaves are excellent in soups and sauces or can be added to salads.

Hardy. Prefers rich, moisture retaining soil in sun or partial shade.

**ST JOHN'S WORT** (*Hypericum perforatum*) P. Ht up to 90cm. An attractive plant for the border, St John's Wort has pale green leaves followed by bright yellow star shaped flowers with prominent gold stamens in summer. In years gone by it was alleged that this herb had magical properties, perhaps due to the red dye which is yielded by the crushed flowers. It has been the subject of modern drug trials.

Hardy. Prefers well drained soil in sun or partial shade.

**STRAWBERRY, WILD** (*Fragaria vesca*) P. Ht up to 30cm. The mid-green toothed leaves of this strawberry are followed by small white flowers with yellow centres. The subsequent bright red fruits are small and sweet and are produced all summer long. In addition to its fruits, young leaves can also be eaten or used to make tea. An ideal plant for pots or edging.

Hardy. Prefers moist rich soil in full sun or partial shade.

**SWEET CICELY** (*Myrrhis odorata*) P. Ht 90cm-1.2m. A lovely herb for a woodland garden or wild area. Sweet Cicely is a tall herb with delicate soft green fern-like leaves which have an aniseed flavour. Umbels of white flowers follow in summer. The fresh leaves can be used in salads or added to stewed fruit, particularly rhubarb and gooseberries to reduce acidity.

Hardy. An excellent herb for well drained humus rich soil and sun or partial shade although it will generally tolerate any conditions. Spreads and self seeds readily.

**TARRAGON, FRENCH** (*Artemisia dracunculus*) P. Ht up to 1m. An excellent culinary herb with upright branched stems and long narrow smooth green leaves which have a mint-anise flavour. French tarragon does not flower in cool climates. Its leaves complement chicken, fish, rice and salads. They add flavour to soups, sauces and salad dressings. An essential herb for Béarnaise sauce.

Half hardy. Prefers moist, well drained soil in full sun. Tarragon needs winter protection and does not like prolonged cold or waterlogged conditions.

**TOMATO, YELLOW CHERRY** (*Lycopersicon esculentum*, Balconi Yellow). An exceptionally sweet yellow cherry tomato which is decorative as well as productive. Plants have a compact habit, making them perfect for containers. If planted in a hanging basket, this tomato will also trail making it a great choice where space is at a premium.

Tomatoes like moist, humus rich soil. Water regularly in dry weather to keep the soil moist. Irregular watering can cause blossom end rot and the skin to split.

Plant out in late May if the weather is good or early June when all danger of frost has passed. Tomatoes like a warm spot, preferably near a south facing wall. Feed regularly with liquid fertiliser.

## THYME

Thymes are hardy evergreens which can be of upright, mound forming or creeping habit. They all like well drained soil in full sun. It is important to cut back thymes after flowering to encourage dense new growth. *Thymus vulgaris* and *T. x citriodorus* and their cultivars are generally thought to be the best for culinary purposes. Good for companion planting, the scent of thyme stimulates other plants. Bees and butterflies love it.

**THYME, ARCHER'S GOLD** (*Thymus x citriodorus* 'Archer's Gold') P. Ht 15-23cm. A compact cultivar which forms a small, neat mound. This thyme has bright gold, lemon scented foliage with pale purple flowers. It is good with fish and vegetables or can be used to make stuffings for chicken dishes. Dried leaves can be added to pot pourri.

**THYME, COMMON** (*Thymus vulgaris*) P. Ht 30-45cm. An essential ingredient for bouquet garni and many French dishes common thyme has small mid green aromatic leaves with pink-mauve flowers in summer. It is also good for soups, marinades, oils, vinegars stuffing, casseroles, baked vegetables and tea. Dried leaves can be added to pot pourri.

**THYME, FRAGRANT OR ORANGE SCENTED** (*Thymus fragrantissimus*) P. Ht 30cm. The small narrow grey-green leaves of this thyme have a lovely fragrant scent of spicy oranges. Very pale pink flowers follow in summer. Fragrant thyme has a warm flavour, making it not only good with meat and vegetable dishes but also sweet puddings. Dried leaves can be added to pot pourri.

**THYME, PINK CHINTZ** (*Thymus serpyllum* 'Pink Chintz') P. Ht 1-7cm. One of the prettiest thymes, Pink Chintz is a vigorous cultivar with grey-green hairy aromatic leaves and pretty starry pale pink flowers. Good for planting in rockeries and gravel. Mainly decorative although can be used as other culinary thymes.

**THYME, SILVER POSIE** (*Thymus vulgaris* 'Silver Posie') P. Ht 25cm. Arguably the best of the silver thymes, Silver Posie has attractive white variegated leaves followed by pale pink-mauve flowers in summer. An essential ingredient for bouquet garni and many French dishes. Good also for soups, marinades, oils, vinegars stuffing, casseroles, baked vegetables and tea. This thyme looks good planted in groups for effect or as an edging plant. Dried leaves can be added to pot pourri.

**VALERIAN** (*Valeriana officinalis*) P. Ht to 1.5m. A good choice for the back of the border, valerian has attractive foliage and an abundance of frothy pink or white sweetly scented flowers in summer. New leaf growth has an attractive bronze tinge. Valerian is used widely as a medicinal herb in Europe although it is banned in America.

Choose your site carefully to avoid having to dig valerian up later as the scent of the roots is attractive to cats. This herb is also a good companion plant as its roots stimulate earthworm activity.

Hardy. Prefers moist soil in sun or partial shade. Grows well next to water.

**VIOLET, SWEET** (*Viola odorata*) P. Ht 15cm. Sweet violet has heart shaped mid-green leaves with dark purple sweetly scented flowers from late winter to spring. Use the flowers in salads, jellies, jams, conserves or vinegars or candied on cakes and desserts.

Hardy. Prefers rich, moist soil and some shade.

**VIPER'S BUGLOSS** (*Echium vulgare*) Bi. Ht 45-60cm. An old medicinal herb often grown now for its striking brilliant blue and red flowers which open over a long period. This herb plant looks particularly attractive grown en masse. No longer commonly used in herbal medicine Viper's Bugloss was traditionally thought to expel poisons and venom. A good drought tolerant plant which is attractive to bees.

Hardy. Prefers light well drained soil in full sun.

**WELSH ONION** (*Allium fistulosum*) P. Ht 50cm. With leaves similar to chives Welsh Onion has large creamy white globe shaped flowers in early summer of the second year. This herb plant can be used as an alternative to chives and so fresh leaves can be snipped into salads or used for butter, sauces, soups and vegetable, egg or cheese dishes. When big enough bulblets may also be pulled, rather like a spring onion.

Hardy. Tolerates most soil conditions but prefers rich, moist soil and a sunny position.

**WORMWOOD** (*Artemisia absinthium*) P. Ht 1m. Wormwood is a small, aromatic shrub with decorative grey green foliage and insignificant yellow flowers from summer to autumn. It is generally grown for its foliage. This herb plant has a strong smell and a bitter taste. It was a household remedy during Biblical times and is used by some practitioners today.

Wormwood is an undemanding herb. It will tolerate drought and light stony soil although will not survive winter waterlogging. Hardy. Requires full sun.

CAUTION: This plant is potentially toxic.

**YELLOW FLAG** (*Iris pseudacorus*) P. Ht to 90cm. A beautiful plant, often found at the water's edge, yellow flag irises have deep yellow flowers from early summer. Made famous by the French kings (their fleur-de-lis) yellow flag was once used for medicinal purposes. It is a good dye plant (yellow from the flowers and black from the roots) and also a good bee plant, popular with both honey and bumble bees.

Hardy. Prefers moisture retaining, fertile soil in full sun or partial shade.

## HERB COLLECTIONS

### **Anyone for Tea?**

Fancy something to pep you up for the day ahead or maybe to ease the stresses of a long day just past? We have just the thing with nine of the most popular herbs for teas all in one collection. Anyone for tea? comprises one each of the following:

Bergamot \* Lemon Verbena \* Chamomile \* Mint \* Sage \* Rosemary  
\* Golden Marjoram \* Lavender \* Anise Hyssop

Please note: Herbal teas should be consumed in moderation. If in doubt please seek professional advice from a qualified herbal practitioner.

### **Bee Happy**

The herbs in our Bee Happy collection pack a punch in the nectar department and are guaranteed to have these hardworking insects buzzing around your garden with delight. Bee Happy comprises one each of the following:

Anise Hyssop \* Bergamot \* Lavender \* Lemon Balm \* Catmint \* Borage  
Oregano Country Cream \* Ginger Mint \* Purple Sage

### **Buttered Up...and Saucy**

Sauces and butters are a great way to gently introduce the myriad of different flavours herbs have to offer without flavouring the whole dish. Small amounts can be finely chopped to make herb butter and sauces can be served on the side if you prefer. Perfect if you are new to herbs or for those just wanting to experiment. Buttered Up...and Saucy comprises one each of the following:

\* Chives \* Garlic Chives \* Horseradish \* Tarragon \* Mint \* French Parsley  
Summer or Winter Savory \* Dill \* Sage

### **Full of Eastern Promise**

Hand picked for connoisseurs of Eastern cuisine. Whether you are after a classic curry or a simple stir fry, we guarantee that the fresh herbs in this collection will all be perfectly at home in your wok. Full of Eastern Promise comprises one each of the following:

Thai Basil \* Mizuna \* Cinnamon Basil \* Coriander \* Mint \* Lemon Grass  
French Parsley \* Bay \* Fennel

Please note that this collection is only available between May and August.

### **Get Stuffed!**

Chicken without stuffing is like gin without tonic. Stuffings are great for adding interest to roast meats. Vegetarian? Stuffed vegetables are delicious too. The herbs in this collection should get you off to a great start. Get Stuffed! comprises one each of the following:

Sage \* Lemon Balm \* Thyme, Silver Posie \* French Parsley  
Summer Savory \* Winter Savory \* Tarragon \* Lemon Thyme \* Rosemary

### Good Companions

Just what the gardener ordered....The herbs in this special collection are perfect companions in the productive garden. They have been chosen for the beneficial impact they have on the plants around them and their ability to deter those troublesome pests. Good Companions comprises one each of the following:

Chamomile \* Nasturtium \* Hyssop \* Summer Savory \* Chives \* Coriander  
Chervil \* Angelica \* Thyme

### Mediterranean Medley

Delight family and friends; re-create the scents and flavours of Mediterranean cuisine in your own kitchen. Introduce this mix of herbs into your home cooked dishes for a feast to remember. Bon appetito! Mediterranean Medley comprises one each of the following:

Greek Oregano \* Thyme \* Spearmint \* Rosemary  
French Parsley \* Sweet Basil/Golden Marjoram \* Bay \* Sage \* Dill

\* Basil is only available between May and August. During other periods Golden Marjoram will be substituted in its place.

### Nine for Newbies

A perfect starter collection for those wishing to create their first herb garden and an ideal gift. Nine for Newbies comprises one each of the following:

Rosemary \* Sage \* Thyme \* Curled Parsley \* Golden Marjoram \* Lavender  
Spearmint \* Chives \* Coriander

## HERB SEEDS

The following seeds are available all year round

Anise Hyssop	Hyssop
Basil	Lemon Balm
Bergamot	Nasturtium
Borage	Parsley
Chamomile	Pot Marjoram
Chervil	Sorrel
Chives	Summer Savory
Coriander	Thyme
Dill	Wild Rocket
Garlic Chives	
Golden Purslane	

In addition we have four Herb Seed Collections comprising 4 packets of seeds per collection as follows:

*Anyone for Tea?*

including Lemon Balm, Bergamot, Chamomile and Anise Hyssop

**Bees & Butterflies** including Thyme, Borage, Anise Hyssop and Pot Marjoram

**Edible Flowers** including Borage, Bergamot, Nasturtium and Chives

**Good Companions** including Chamomile, Nasturtium, Chives and Hyssop