



Home Garden Tips

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How to Harvest Herbs for Cooking

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Herbs are Mother Nature's gift to cooks!

When we moved to our new home over 11 years ago, one of my very first concerns was my herb garden. As cooking is important in my daily life, I use home grown herbs constantly. Since it is not feasible to have all my herbs growing fresh in my garden year-round, I harvest periodically for the lean times.

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This harvested herb reserve from the garden can be either dried or frozen (in water using an ice cube tray in the freezer). Do not keep your reserve too long because time will change the flavor. Never thaw frozen herbs ahead of time.

Herbs are best harvested after the morning dew has dried up but before the heat of the day. The optimum flavoring oil is at a peak when the plant is beginning to bloom; so, it is the prime time for most herb harvesting. We enjoy lots of herbs in our favorite recipes. Because of that heavy usage, I will harvest all I can during prime time. These herbs will be held in reserve.

Make small bouquets (just a few twigs). Hang each bouquet tied with raffia upside down in a cool, dark space. You can also use a perforated tray; remember to turn your herbs to achieve even dryness. Once dry, place in a sealed glass container or a plastic bag.

Also you can make cooking portions if you wish to freeze them. I have found that making an infusion with herbs, then removing the herbs from the liquid and reducing it to a concentrate works great for frozen cubes.

Enjoy!

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