



## HOW TO GROW SEASONING HERBS

Herbs are short, soft plants. They can be grouped into seasoning herbs, medicinal herbs or narcotic herbs. Seasoning herbs, also called culinary herbs, are used primarily for enhancing the flavour of foods.

Among the most commonly used seasoning herbs are celery, chive, parsley, thyme, chadon beni, basil, mint and lemon grass.

Container planting or trough culture is recommended for growing seasoning herbs for home use. Almost any container can be utilized for planting herbs; crates, tins, oil drums, barrels, buckets, flower pots, troughs or grow boxes.

If you are just starting to do home gardening, study the factsheet titled “Places to Plant at Home” and “Container Planting”.



Figure 1:- Different Types of Herbs in flowerpots

### PLANTING MATERIAL AND RECOMMENDED SPACING FOR SOME HERBS

Seasonable herbs can be interplanted with vegetables or ornamentals in the home garden. However when planting several of the same type of herbs, you can use the recommended spacings in the following table:

NAME OF HERB	QUANTITY REQUIRED TO SUPPLY FAMILY	PROPAGATION MATERIAL	RECOMMENDED SPACING
Celery	12-18	Seedlings	20cm (8in) x 20cm (8in)
Chive:			
Single	18-24	Seedlings	10cm (4in) x 10cm (4in)
Bunches	6		20cm (8in) x 20cm (8in)
Parsley	6-10	Seedlings	20cm (8in) x 20cm (8in)
French Thyme (Oregano)	1-3	Propagated cuttings	50-60cm (20-24in) x 50-60cm (20-24in)
English Thyme (Fine Thyme)	6	Seedlings	20cm (8in) x 20cm (8in)
Spanish Thyme (Podina)	1-3	Cuttings	50-60cm (20-24in) x 50-60cm (20-24in)
Chadon Beni (Cilantro or Bandhania)	As needed	Seeds, young plants, base of plants	15cm (6in) x 15cm (6in)

### PLANTING

Use the planting material and spacing recommended for each herb. Proper drainage is critical to the survival of all soft-stemmed seasoning shrubs. Generous amounts of well rotted manure can be incorporated into poor soils.

**Chive :-** If using off shoots as planting material, trim roots to 2.5 cm (1 in) before planting. Also the top must be removed to about 2.5 cm (1 in) above where the last blade separates from the base of the plant. Transplant late in the afternoon and water plants.

**Chadon beni** :- If using the base of the plant, remove the flower stalk and 2/3 of each leaf from the plant before planting.

### FERTILIZING

Immediately after transplanting, apply 5 g (1 tsp) of a complete NPK fertilizer such as 12:24:12 at the base of each plant to encourage root growth. Thereafter, continue fertilizing every 10 to 15 days with a granular NPK fertilizer e.g. 20:20:20 using 1 to 3 tsp (5 to 15 g) per plant. Alternatively, a foliar fertilizer can be used weekly e.g., 20:10:10 at a rate of 5g (1 tsp) to 4 litres (1 gal) of water. One litre (¼ gal) of solution is enough for 10 plants.

### PEST AND DISEASE CONTROL

Because of the strong aroma, seasoning herbs can repel most insects pests.

A good crop management programme will control most diseases in the home garden.

This involves:

- The prompt removal of diseased plants.
- The regular watering of plants. This strengthens the plants' natural resistance to disease.
- Destruction of crop residues
- Crop rotation.

### CULTURAL PRACTICES

Seasoning herbs are noted for their tolerance to shade and can be grown as companion crops with other crops especially those susceptible to mite/insect attack.

Every week, lightly till the soil around the plant. This allows more water to reach the roots.

Chives thrive when soil is well drained and mulched . Mulching reduces soil water loss due to evaporation. It also protects the plants from soil borne diseases that are spread by soil splash.



Figure 3:- *Wooden Design Container for Select Herbs*

Spanish thyme and parsley need to be replanted or moulded as they mature. If this is not done, spanish thyme tends to become woody, while parsley tends to grow out of the soil and eventually topple over.

### HARVESTING

Harvest mature leaves by cutting them with a sharp knife. Chives, celery and parsley can be harvested by cutting 2.5 cm. (1 in) above the area where the blades come off the plant. At least 3 leaves should be left on the chive plant for growth to continue.

Chadon beni leaves can be harvested from the main stem; by trimming 2/3 off from each leaf.

Thyme can be harvested by picking off individual leaves or by breaking off pieces of stem, 15 to 20 cm (6 to 8 ins) long, with leaves and side shoots.

*Farmers Training Centre  
Caroni North Bank Road, Centeno  
642-0167 or 646-1966*

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