

GROW IT

BASIL

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Basil is the most popular of the many culinary herbs grown by gardeners, and it is a great place to start with growing and using herbs.

Some common examples are sweet basil, cinnamon basil, holy basil, purple basil and Thai basil.


 Get It

- 🔥 Purchase a transplant at a local greenhouse or garden center.
- 🔥 Choose plants free from signs of insects or disease. Check under leaves for any signs of disease and around new leaves at the growing tip for any signs of insects.


 Plant It

- * Plant outdoors after last spring frost in late April or early May in much of Tennessee.
- * Select a spot with six to eight hours of sun per day.
- * Plant in well-drained soil and space 12-18 inches apart in ground.
- * Mulching after planting can provide even soil moisture and temperature.
- * If planting in a container, use a medium-sized pot to slow down the drying of the media.
- * In the South, especially in containers on porches or balconies, basil can benefit from an hour or two of afternoon shade in the summer.



Grow It

- ★ Basil grows best when daytime temperatures are around 80 F, so it will grow well from late spring to early fall in Tennessee.
- ★ Don't let the soil completely dry out or the plants wilt, but make sure it doesn't stay wet all the time because this will encourage disease.
- ★ As the plants grow, they will need to be watered more often if in containers.
- ★ A little soluble fertilizer added weekly to water is helpful to support new growth following harvest.

Pick It

- ◆ Harvest leaves any time after the plant has reached 6-8 inches; don't wait until the plant begins to flower.
- ◆ Pinch leaves from the tender tip of the stem to encourage new growth or snip leafy stems right above the next pair of leaves. Remember, every pinch will promote the growth of two new side shoots.
- ◆ Frequent harvest may slow down flowering in basil, and some types will be slower to flower than others.

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