Published on *Kitchen Gardeners International* (http://kgi.org)

3 Best Herbs For Your Organic Garden

Mon, 03/26/2012 - 09:15 -- smilinggardener

I've been thinking I'd like to write a short piece on herb gardening for beginners, and I was trying to think of what I would recommend as the 3 best herbs for getting started with in an organic culinary herb garden.

It's a tough one, so I'm going to ask for your help. There are a lot of great plants for organic herb gardening out there, so I set a few parameters to narrow it down:

- Perennial. While herbs like basil are dill (they're annuals where I live) are some of my favorites, I think it's a great idea to start with perennial herbs that you can plant just once and harvest from throughout the year, every year.
- Easy To Grow. Rosemary is nice, but difficult to maintain in colder climates (it may need to be brought inside, which can cause problems). If you're just starting out, I think you'll want to start with the herb plants you can put in the ground and not worry about.
- Often-Used. I have a nice tarragon in my garden, but I rarely use it in the kitchen. I figure it's good to start with garden herbs that are used often in your cooking.
- Easy To Find. I didn't go for plants that are direct seeded outdoors. Most herb plants are better started inside anyway. Instead, I went for garden herbs that you'll easily find in the garden centre, as that's the simplest way to start your organic herb garden.

With that, here are my 3 recommendations for herb gardening for beginners:

1. Chives. Related to onions and garlic, chives are actually a small bulb, but you use the above-ground leaves in the kitchen. They are very nice in many dishes, raw or cooked.

Once you get the plants going, you can ignore them and they'll continue to grow in your home herb garden. They'll self seed, too. Not as medicinal as the others below, but chives are good for digestion and improve the appetite. They're also used as an insect repellant. Full sun or a touch of shade.

2. Oregano. A staple in sauces, we use oregano all the time - fresh and dried. It's often used dried in the Mediterranean.

Apparently, most dried oregano from the store is actually from others plants - mostly Lippia and Origanum (same family, but a different plant). Great for herb gardening, as it attracts insects and has a whole whack of medicinal uses. It really helps the digestive system. Not great in medicinal quantities for my cousin Kari though (8+ months pregnant). Full sun or a touch of shade.

3. Thyme. A staple in herb gardens that is great in sauces and attracts insects. It's mostly used in cooked foods. The oil in the leaves is an antiseptic and disinfectant.

You can even walk on some varieties and they will be okay. A good choice for herb gardening for beginners. Needs full sun and doesn't like wet feet.

So those are my picks, but more important, I want to know yours. If you're into vegetable gardens, what are your top 3 herb plants that people should start with in their organic garden?

Image (optional):

Image credit (optional):
source [1]
Crops:
chives [2]
oregano [3]
thyme [4]
Type:
how-to [5]
Topics:
herbs [6]
organic gardening [7]
Group content visibility:
Use group defaults

Source URL: http://kgi.org/blog/smilinggardener/3-best-herbs-your-organic-garden

Links:
[1] http://www.smilinggardener.com
[2] http://kgi.org/crops/chives
[3] http://kgi.org/crops/oregano
[4] http://kgi.org/crops/thyme
[5] http://kgi.org/blog-type/how
[6] http://kgi.org/topics/herbs
[7] http://kgi.org/topics/organic-gardening