



## Growing Herbs

This is a summary of advice from members growing herbs in window boxes. It's not comprehensive - just members' personal experience. If you want to try something not listed, it may still be worth a try (it's surprising that sun-loving herbs like Rosemary and Basil grow on the North side).

### General growing advice for herbs in containers:

- Use a soil-based compost, either organic or John Innes potting compost (soil-based compost retains moisture which is a must to stop containers drying out). Water in the morning to give plants a chance if temperatures are high during the day - especially for containers in full sun.
- Feed container plants weekly from March until September. This keeps the plants healthy and helps them produce leaves, especially on cut and come again salads.

### Members have had success with herbs in the following locations:

#### North-facing

Rosemary  
Thyme  
Mint  
Basil, bush basil  
Parsley

#### South-facing

Rosemary  
Thyme  
Basil in pots and put out if weather is fine  
Chives  
Blackcurrant sage  
Bay  
Sage  
Mint  
Sorrel  
Marjoram  
Oregano

#### East-facing

Rosemary  
Thyme  
Blackcurrant sage  
Rocket

#### West-facing

Rosemary  
Thyme  
Parsley  
Basil in pots and put out if weather is fine  
Chives  
Bay  
Sage  
Curry plant  
Sorrel  
Marjoram  
Oregano

## **Growing tips**

### **General**

You can put herbs that need shade on the floor of your balcony to keep them out of the sun (subject to the Estate Office rules).

### **Parsley**

Flat-leaved parsley is said to withstand heat better and be less liable to bolting than curly.

Prone to aphids, which get right into the curly leaves but can more easily be sprayed, picked off or washed off flat-leaved types.

Likes soil that is both fairly rich and also well-drained but needs lots of water in the sun.

Does well grown as an annual.

### **Rosemary**

Withstands dryness

Becomes woody and needs replacing after a few years

Easy to grow from cuttings

### **Thyme**

Withstands dryness, needs to be well-drained, especially in winter.

It's a good idea to mix some sharp sand (about a third) into compost and to water fairly lightly. Enjoy sun: think of the herb-scented maquis around the Mediterranean.

There's a golden variety of thyme – *thymus aureum* – which makes an attractive colour contrast.

Common thyme very prone to fail if soil becomes water-logged.

### **Mint**

Mint needs to be grown in a separate pot as it tends to take over.

After a while, it gets 'leggy' and woody; take some of the roots (runners) and repot.

### **Sage**

Ordinary sage is quite good but if it dries out too much it can get mildew

There are attractive purple and variegated forms

Longer lasting varieties with interesting flavoured leaves, such as blackcurrant sage and tangerine sage, need cutting back in the spring and replacing after a few years

### **Rocket**

Grows easily from seed but it tends to bolt. Needs shade.

### **Basil & Bush Basil**

Do well if planted annually - late in Spring in the case of Basil (*from a member who plants herbs on the North side*).

*Wenda Sturrock; revised September 2019*