

# Descriptions of Popular Herbs



## Annuals

**Annuals and Biennials:** **Annuals** grow from seed and complete their life cycle in 1 year. They will likely be killed by frost and must be started from seed or transplants each year. **Biennials** overwinter one season and produce seed the second season.

Herb	Height	Description	Culture	Harvest
<b>Anise</b> ( <i>Pimpinella anisum</i> )	20-24"	Serrated leaves, small white flowers. Low spreading plant is a slow growing annual	Moderately rich soil. Full sun. Space 6-8" in a row with rows 12-14" apart	When seeds turn brown, or use leaves while green as needed
<b>Basil</b> ( <i>Ocimum basilicum</i> )	20-24"	Leafy, light green foliage; flowers white or lavender. Fast growing annual	Start seed indoors in early April or sow seed in early spring. Space 12". Protected sunny location preferred	Pick leaves when flowering begins. Cut plants 4-6" above ground
<b>Caraway</b> ( <i>Carum carvi</i> )	12-24"	Carrot-like leaf with small, creamy white flowers. <i>Biennial</i> .	Sow seed directly in spring. Space 6". Full sun.	Harvest leaves when mature. Seeds form mid-way through 2 <sup>nd</sup> season
<b>Chervil</b> ( <i>Anthriscus cerefolium</i> )	18"	Similar to parsley with light green lacy leaves. Flowers are small white clusters.	Sow seed in moist, partially shaded location. Space 6".	Harvest mature leaves and dry, or use fresh for garnishes
<b>Coriander</b> ( <i>Coriandrum sativum</i> )	24"	Large, leafy plant with white flowers	Sow seeds directly. Use full sun area and thin to 10". Prefers cooler temperatures.	Harvest seeds when they begin to turn brown. Seeds are usually crushed. Or, use tender leaves as fresh herb
<b>Dill</b> ( <i>Anethum graveolens</i> )	24-36"	Tall plant with feathery green leaves. Open umbrella-shaped flower heads	Seed directly and thin to 12". If seeds mature and fall, they will come up again next year	Harvest mature seed heads before seeds drop. May use small leaves as well
<b>Fennel</b> ( <i>Foeniculum vulgare</i> )	36"	Fine, feathery leaves with broad, bulb-like leaf base	Sow in early spring and thin to 12"	Harvest either young sprigs and leaves or seeds
<b>Parsley</b> ( <i>Petroselinum crispum</i> )	6-10"	Curled or plain dark leaves	Seeds generally slow to germinate. Seed in early spring. Space 8-10"	Harvest mature leaves as needed
<b>Sweet Marjoram</b> ( <i>Majorana hortensis</i> )	12"	Fine textured plant with white flowers	Start seedlings in shade. Mature plants will grow in full sun. Space 8-10"	Harvest mature leaves as needed
<b>Summer Savory</b> ( <i>Satureja hortensis</i> )	18"	Small, gray-green leaves with purple and white flowers	Plant tender annual after danger of frost has past. Space 6-9"	Harvest mature leaves

**Perennial Herbs Listed on Back**

# Descriptions of Popular Herbs

## Perennials

**Perennials:** Grow from seed or transplants the first year but grow year after year. Some can be propagated by several other means as well. A straw or leaf mulch through the winter may protect them from winter damage.

Herb	Height	Description	Culture	Harvest
<b>Chives</b> ( <i>Allium schoenoprasum</i> )	12"	Onion-type leaves with blue, round flower head	Can be grown in containers or outdoors in spring. Divide to increase. Space 5"	Clip leaves as needed
<b>Garlic Chives</b> ( <i>Allium tuberosum</i> )	12-16"	Similar to chives	Same as chives	same as chives
<b>Peppermint</b> ( <i>Mentha piperita</i> )	18"	Vigorous bush-type plant with purple flowers	Prefers rich, moist soil. Space 8-10"	Harvest young or mature leaves as needed
<b>Spearmint</b> ( <i>Mentha spicata</i> )	18"	Pointed, crinkled leaves	Same as peppermint	same as peppermint
<b>Lemon Balm</b> ( <i>Melissa officinalis</i> )	24"	Crinkled, dull green leaves with white blossoms. Vigorous grower	Space 12". Prefers full sun	Harvest mature leaves as needed
<b>Lovage</b> ( <i>Levisticum officinale</i> )	24-36"	Grows quite tall	May start indoors and move to sunny location. Space 12-15"	Harvest mature leaves
<b>Oregano</b> ( <i>Origanum vulgare</i> )	12"	Choose English strains. Produces pink flowers	Plant in rich soil. Space 8-10" Start in protected location and move to full sun	Harvest mature leaves
<b>Rosemary</b> ( <i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i> )	36"	Woody shrub with dark green foliage and small blue flowers	Start cuttings in early spring. Space 24"	Harvest mature leaves or sprigs
<b>Sage</b> ( <i>Salvia officinalis</i> )	12-18"	Shrub-like plant with gray-green leaves and purple flowers	Plant in well-drained soil. Space 30"	Harvest leaves before flowering
<b>Tarragon</b> ( <i>Artemisia dracunculus</i> )	24"	Select French tarragon. Fine, dark green leaves	Prefers well-drained soils. Space 12"	Harvest mature leaves or sprigs
<b>Thyme</b> ( <i>Thymus vulgaris</i> )	8-12"	Narrow, dark green leaves	Start seeds indoors. Prefers full sun and well-drained soil. Space 10-12"	Harvest leaves, and flower clusters before first flowers open.

The source for this **GVST Gardening Guide** is Thomas Longbrake, former Extension Horticulturist with the Texas Cooperative Extension Service. For more information about growing, harvesting and using herbs, visit the Texas A&M website <http://www.aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu>. You will also find herb recipes.