

## Perennial Herb Plants and Garden

**Bee Balm (*Monarda didyma*):** Prefers moist rich soil with humus and will grow from 2 to 3 feet tall. It will readily adapt to full sun or partial shade. Bright red flowers throughout the summer. Aromatic. Can be propagated from seed; make root divisions in the fall or spring. Dig the new growth into the garden and water well. Attractive to bees. Bee balm will grow well with blue flag, bloodroot, bearberry and strawberry. Known to enhance growth of tomatoes by hastening pollination (Kavash 125). Sow indoors in January-February; sow outdoors in July (Seattle Tilth).

**Borage (*Borago officinalis*):** A hardy, sprawling annual, borage grows 2-3 feet tall and blooms blue, sometimes pink flowers. Grows in any soil, even poor and dry, but it is much happier and less prone to mildew in better soil with more moisture. Planting with strawberries attracts bees and improves yield (Mabey 274 says well-drained soil). Prefers a sunny position. (Houdret 119). Sow in late spring. Self seeds. Butterflies and bees love it. (Mabey 274). Harvest June-July. Needs 15" of space. Sow outdoors in April-late June. Shelter and food plant for birds (Seattle Tilth).

**Calendula (*Calendula officinalis*):** An annual clumping herb, this plant likes full sun; grows to 12-15 inches; needs 10" of space; blooms yellow, orange, and needs low to moderate amounts of water (Hartung 18-19). Sow outdoors in March-late June (Seattle Tilth).

**California Poppy (*Eschscholzia spp.*):** Sow outdoors in February-March, September (Seattle Tilth). Harvest in the summer and fall (Hoffman 246).

### Campanula

**Catnip (*Nepeta cataria*):** A perennial clumping herb with grey foliage, this plant is happy in full sun, partial shade, or shade; it grows 15-24"; needs 12" of space; blooms white; and needs low to moderate amounts of water (Hartung 18-19). Sow outdoors in July (Seattle Tilth). Harvest in summer and fall (Hoffmann 246). Butterflies and bees love it.

**Chamomile (*Chamaemelum nobile*):** A perennial spreading herb, this plant likes full sun to partial shade; grows 8-10"; needs 8" of space, blooms white flowers with yellow centers; needs moderate water; and well-drained soil (Hartung 18-19). Harvest in spring and summer (Hoffmann 246). Planting with others repels flying insects and improves crop yield (Mabey 269). Aromatic.

**Clary Sage (*Salvia sclarea*):** This is a biennial clumping [and spreading!] herb that requires full sun; grows to 3 feet; needs 24" of space; blooms lavender, pink, and white; needs moderate amounts of water; and well-drained soil (Hartung 18-19).

**Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*):** This wild and crazy volunteer will do whatever it wants to do. Harvest young leaves in the spring, whole plant all year, and the root in the summer (Hoffman 246). Butterflies and bees love it.

**Echinacea (*Echinacea augustifolia or purpurea*):** These rugged perennials like most soil types and full sun. Bloom purplish-pink flowers. They will increase by division and by seeds sown in the garden in late summer and fall. Grows well with other sun lovers, especially heal-all, chili peppers, evening primrose, and yarrow (Kavasch 154). Grow 4 feet high, prefers well-drained humus-rich soil and a sunny position or partial shade. Cut back the stems as the flowers fade to encourage a second

blooming. Sow seeds in spring, under glass at a temperature of 55 °F in late spring or autumn (Houdret 145). Harvest roots in fall (Hoffmann 246).

**Evening Primrose (*Oenothera biennis*):** A biennial clumping herb, this plant will be happy in full sun or partial shade; will grow 3-4 feet tall; needs 10-12" of space; blooms yellow; and needs moderate amounts of water (Hartung 20-21). Prefers dry, stony soil. Butterflies and Bees love it. Sow late summer in situ. Harvest flowers, seeds, and root (Mabey 277). Generally takes two years for seedlings to bloom. Collect seeds in late summer. Grows happily with sun-loving herbs, especially bee balm, and coneflower (Kavasch 158). Sow outdoors in July (Seattle Tilth).

**Feverfew (*Tanacetum parthenium*):** A perennial clumping herb, this plant likes full sun or partial shade; will grow 24 inches tall; needs 12" of space; blooms white; needs moderate amounts of water; and especially likes rich loam soil (Hartung 20-21).

#### **Forget-me-not**

**Lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*):** An evergreen perennial, silverish shrub, this plant enjoys full sun; grows about 24" tall; blooms purple; needs little water; and likes well-drained, sandy soil (Hartung 20-21). Butterflies and bees love it. Sow autumn without heat or early spring. Cut back after flowering, mid to late summer. Softwood cuttings in spring; hardwood cuttings in autumn (Mabey 275). Harvest June-July. Needs 24" of space (Seattle Tilth). Harvest in the summer and fall (Hoffmann 246).

**Lamb's Ears (*Stachys lanata*):** Sow outdoors in July (Seattle Tilth).

**Lemon Balm (*Melissa officinalis*):** An evergreen perennial, golden-yellow, clumping herb; this plant likes full sun or partial shade; grows 3-4 feet tall; blooms white; needs moderate amounts of water; and well drained soil (Hartung 20-21). Butterflies and bees love it. Sow in late spring; divide roots in spring or autumn; harvest leaves in growing season (Mabey 277). June-September. Needs 18-24". Sow outdoors in late April-July (Seattle Tilth).

**Oriental Lillies (*Lilium spp.*):** Sow outdoors in October

**Lung Wort (*Pulmonaria officinalis*):** A hardy perennial, growing to 12". The tubular flowers, borne in spring, are pink at first, then blue. Grows best in humus-rich moist soil and a shady position (Houdret 205). Sow in autumn; divide roots after flowering; harvest whole plant when flowers open (Mabey 279). Harvest spring, summer, and fall (Hoffmann 247).

**Mint (*Mentha spp.*):** not sure which. See peppermint below.

**Mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*):** This tall, straggly perennial grows 3-5 feet in height. The leaves are grey-green with white undersides. Panicles of grey-green flowers appear in the summer. Aromatic (Houdret 115). Harvest summer and fall (Hoffman 247).

**Mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*):** A biennial clumping herb, this plant likes full sun; grows 5-6 feet tall; needs 15" of space; blooms yellow; needs low to moderate amounts of water; and well drained soil (Hartung 22-23). Sow seeds in autumn or spring in situ or seed tray; harvest leaves and flowers (Mabey 279). Sow outdoors in July (Seattle Tilth). Harvest leaves and flowers in the summer (Hoffman 247).

#### **Muskmallow**

**Peppermint (*Mentha x piperita*):** A perennial spreading [can be invasive] herb, this plant thrives in full sun, partial shade, or shade; grows to 24"; needs 12" of space; blooms purple; and needs moderate to high amounts of water (Hartung 22-23). Butterflies and bees love it. Aromatic. Divide root runners

in growing season; cuttings root in water. Harvest leaves and flowering stems. Planting with others repels flies and cabbage grubs (Mabey 277). Harvest July-August (Seattle Tilth).

**Opium Poppy (*Papaver somniferum*):** Grey-ish foliage.

**Purple Sage (*Salvia officinalis Purpurascens group*):** An evergreen, highly aromatic, shrubby, purple-ish perennial, growing to 2 feet. Blooms violet-blue flowers in early summer. Grow in light, moist, well-drained soil in full sun. Prune sage in the spring to keep it in good shape, or just after flowering, but do not cut into old wood. After a few years, sages can become straggly and need to be replaced (Houdret 215).

**Rose (*Rosa spp.*):** Fully established where they are, surrounding the house with their aroma. I'm just gonna sit back and enjoy.

**Rosemary (*Rosmarinus spp.*):** A clumping, tender perennial, evergreen herb, this plant loves full sun; grows 12-36 inches and taller; needs 12-15" of space; blooms blue; needs low to moderate water; and well drained soil (Hartung 24-25). Butterflies and bees love it. Sow seeds in seed tray at 75-80° F; take cutting of non-flowering shoots; from early summer; harvest leaves. Planting with sage is beneficial (Mabey 279). Harvest summer and fall (Hoffmann 247).

**Self-Heal (*Prunella vulgaris*):** A perennial spreading herb, this plant likes full sun or partial shade; grows 8-10" tall; needs 10-12" of space; blooms purple, pink, and white; needs moderate water; and likes humus soil (Hartung 24-25). Harvest in the summer (Hoffmann 247).

**Skullcap (*Scutellaria lateriflora*):** This spreading perennial herb enjoys moisture-retaining soil in the sun or semi-shade; grows 24" tall; blooms small blue flowers in the summer; and has yellow-green foliage. Sow seeds in the spring; divide roots in early spring; and harvest whole herb before flowering (Mabey 279). Grows well with strawberry, mayapple, maidenhair fern, blue flag, and ginger (Kavasch 196). Harvest in the summer and fall (Hoffman 247).

**St. John's Wort (*Hypericum perforatum*):** This perennial spreading herb loves full sun, grows 24-30" tall, needs 12" of space, blooms bright yellow star-shaped flowers, has low to moderate water needs, and likes well-drained soil (Hartung 24-25). Harvest summer and fall (Hoffmann 247).

### **Sweet Rocket**

**Sweet Woodruff (*Galium odoratum*):** A spreading perennial, grows about 16" tall, and blooms star-shaped, scented, white flowers in summer. Grow in humus-rich soil in partial shade (Houdret 156).

**Valerian (*Valeriana officinalis*):** A perennial clumping herb, this plant thrives in full sun, partial shade, or shade; grows 3-4 feet tall; needs 12-15" of space; blooms white and pale pink; needs moderate to high amounts of water; and likes humus soil (Hartung 24-25). Sow outdoors in July. Shelter and food plant for birds (Seattle Tilth). Harvest in the fall (Hoffmann 247). Butterflies and bees love it.

**Wormwood (*Artemisia spp.*):** An evergreen perennial, spreading, silver herb, this plant likes full sun or partial shade; grows 12 inches or taller; needs 12-15" of space; blooms yellow and white; needs little water; and likes well drained soil (Hartung 24-25). Harvest in the summer and fall (Hoffmann 247). Aromatic.

**Yarrow, white (*Achillea millefolium*):** A perennial spreading herb, Yarrow likes full sun or partial shade; grows 2-3 feet; blooms white, pink, and yellow; needs low to moderate amounts of water; and likes well drained soil (Hartung 24-25). Yarrow is known as an "herb of strength" that strengthens anything growing nearby. This makes yarrow a fine companion to any. Grows well with sage, sweetgrass, blue

flag, and wild garlic and onions, perhaps making them even sweeter and more aromatic (Kavasch 219). Needs 6" of space; harvest June through September. Sow indoors in January-February; outdoors in June-early July (Seattle Tilth). Harvest in the summer and fall (Hoffman 247). Butterflies and bees love it.

## <sup>1</sup>Timing of duties for her majesty...

For **Zone B: Foothills and low mountains in a Maritime Climate in the Pacific Northwest:**  
Sow two to three weeks later in the spring, and two to three weeks earlier in the summer and fall (Seattle Tilth).

Some witches follow the movement of the Moon through the zodiac, will plant herb only during the moist and fertile signs. The best times to plant are while the Moon is in Cancer, Scorpio, Pisces, Taurus, and Capricorn.

Herbs that contain their usefulness in seeds, leaves, and flowers are planted during the waxing Moon. Flowers and herbs valued for their blossoms should be planted while the Moon is in her increase (the first quarter is preferred) and in the sign of Libra for delicious fragrance and beauty. If abundance is more the concern, then plant flowers while the Moon is in Cancer, Scorpio or Pisces.

Root crops, such as angelica, mandrake and peony, should be planted while the Moon is on the wane during the third or last quarter. The day of planting should fall upon the day after the first quarter begins. This means that one week remains to finish the above-ground crops (Cunningham 202).

### Spring:

**February:** Cloches warms the soil and reduces the amount of rain that falls on the bed, two or three weeks before a ground is ready to plant. Test for wetness 6-8" down before gardening.

Perennial plants that bloom in late spring, summer and fall can be safely divide in February. Separate out the dead center of a healthy plant: Take out the whole plant and separate parts of the crown by prying it apart with two small garden forks, or cut the crown into smaller pieces with a sharp knife or machete. Keep the outside growth for future plants. Before replanting, renew the soil where you are going to plant by forking in compost and soil amendments.

Start seeds.

**March:** Start seeds.

Add organic fertilizers or soil amendments.

Time for spring salads!

Composting.

**April:** Pull small weed seedlings before they go quickly to seed. Work with a small hand fork to get rid of weeds and bring air into the soil.

Rake away un-decomposed leaves before planting.

Transplant seedlings into the garden, when it has two or three true leaves, in the afternoon or evening.

Handle small seedlings by their seed leaves; they will fall off, while the stem is needed all its life.

Dig a hole big enough to fit the roots without bunching them.

Water the seedling well with lukewarm water, and try not to get the leaves wet. Place the transplants in the shade for a few days to minimize transpiration and water loss.

Add organic liquid fertilizers to the soil.

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The month of the slug! Hunt slugs at night or early in the morning. Follow all slime trails. Slugs can burrow into the top 2 inches of soil. Frequent cultivation of the soil exposes juveniles, damages the eggs (translucent and clustered), and disturbs their navigation since they follow their own slime trails to feed. Set beer traps. Slugs do not migrate over dry soil. Surround the yard with non-irrigated borders to discourage unwanted migrants in summer. Slugs are disinclined to travel over a copper strip, set vertically like a fence.

Composting (Seattle Tilth).

**Propagating and planting:** Sow seeds of hardy annuals in trays in a greenhouse, including borage and sage. Hardy annuals and perennials that are easy to raise from seed should not be sown outdoors until later in spring, when the soil has warmed up.

Take root cuttings of mint, and chamomile. To layer herbs, mound up earth around straggly thymes and sages, to encourage new shoots, or bend a single branch into soil until it roots to form a new plant. Fibrous-rooted herbs and herbaceous plants can now be divided throughout the spring months to make a vigorous new plant.

**Harvesting:** Flowers soon after they have opened when they are at their best. Bark should not be stripped from very young trees (Houdret 70-75).. Harvest aerial or above ground parts between 6 and 10 am, just before they wilt in the sun. If harvesting leaf, many are best just before flowering. Harvest most flowers just as they are beginning to bloom, you should be able to see the color of the bud. The traditional moon phase for harvesting aerial parts is near or during the full moon. Harvest saps and pitches in the late winter or early spring. Harvest barks in the spring or fall. Never strip, take the whole tree. Always leave the healthiest looking trees. If you take from the small branches only, be aware of potentially leaving the tree vulnerable to fungal rot. For many barks, the inner bark, or cambium, is the most active. Leave short trunks for pollarding, and low stumps for coppicing. This will provide an ongoing harvest. The traditional phase for barks is the three-quarter waning moon. Harvest biennials in the autumn of the first year or the spring of the second year. The traditional phase is the new moon (Buhner 191).

**Care of seedlings:** Seedlings raised in trays will have to be pricked out and potted to develop and harden off.

Outdoor seedlings need thinning out, so that the plants left have enough space. Plant out pot-grown herbs.

**Weeding:** Hoe weeds and unwanted plants out of paths and beds immediately as they appear. Much easier to control throughout the season. Spread mulch now to suppress weeds and conserve moisture. Most effective when soil is damp. Prepare beds for planting by forking over and incorporating garden compost or slow-release fertilizer. In heavy soils dig in manure or bulky organic material.

**Pruning:** Don't start pruning hard too early in spring when frosts are still likely. New growth will frost. As soon as the weather is suitable and all risk of frost is over, prune shrubs and silvery herbs that have suffered winter damage back to new shoots. Cut out dead and straggly growth on sages and thymes, but trim thymes only lightly, after flowering, as they do not respond well to heavy pruning. Rosemary can be cut back quite hard, but leave it until it has flowered.

**Containers:** Trim out any dead or old growth on container-grown plants and start to give them more water and a liquid feed. Repot if needed (Houdret 70-75).

### Summer:

**May:** Last frost dates are around mid-May to June. Use calendula as a summer cover crop to prepare bed for fall and winter. Turn the plant under about 10 weeks after sowing. Sow 2 oz per 1,000 sq feet.

Composting.

**June:** Check soil moisture: dig down 5-7 inches into the soil and squeeze it into a firm ball. If water leaks out, it doesn't need it. If you toss it up and catch it and it falls apart, the soil needs water.

Get to know beneficial insects.

Composting.

**July:** Harvest (Seattle Filth).

**Propagating:** Stem cuttings can be taken from many plants, starting with softwood cuttings from late spring to midsummer and continuing with semi-ripe cuttings from late summer to early autumn.

Collect seeds of annuals as they ripen, for use, or for sowing to produce a new crop, such as poppies, pt marigolds, nasturtiums, sunflowers, dill and coriander (cilantro); and of biennials and perennials, including angelica, caraway, sweet cicely, fennel and lovage. Clear the seeds, removing the seed husks, and store in clearly marked paper envelopes. Not plastic. Sow seeds within a year of collection; **angelica** must be sown within a few months.

**Weeding and watering:** Weed, allow plants to self-seed, transplant later. Add mulch if needed. Water newly planted herbs well and water lovers. Water containers everyday.

**Harvesting and pruning:** Use fresh cut herbs in the kitchen and harvest leaves for drying for winter use, before they flower. Leafy herbs, such as lovage and mint, should be cut down to ground level in early summer to midsummer, before they start to seed, to ensure a second crop. Water in dry spells. Cut back chive flowers and stems for new leafy growth and dead head roses and annuals to encourage new growth. Cut aromatic foliage and flowers for drying. Cut green out of variegated plants. Trim throughout the season (Houdret 70-75).

Bulbs, late summer to early autumn. Harvest aerial or above ground parts between 6 and 10 am, just before they wilt in the sun. If harvesting leaf, many are best just before flowering. Harvest most flowers just as they are beginning to bloom, you should be able to see the color of the bud. The traditional moon phase for harvesting aerial parts is near or during the full moon (Buhner 191).

### Autumn:

**August:** a second spring to us.

Powdery mildew prevention and control.

Composting.

**September:** Over wintering cover crops.

Thin plants a little more than you would in the spring.

Recognize nutrient deficiencies in plants. Do soil testing (Houdret 70-75).

**October:** First frost occurs in early October.

Prepare cloches for winter. Leave off on days above 40°F.

Cover crops can still be sown in beds where plants have been removed (Seattle Tilth).

**Propagating:** Sow seeds of biennials, including angelica, clary sage, anise, and caraway in pots to keep in a cold frame or in a cold greenhouse over the winter. Seeds that require vernalization before they will germinate should be sown outdoors, either in pots or in the ground, including primrose. Seeds sown in pots will protect them from predators.

Many perennials may be divided for replanting in the border or for starting off as new plants in pots. Dig up French tarragon, put it into a large pot and leave in the cold greenhouse over the winter, for dividing into new plants in spring.

Hardwood cuttings of fully mature wood may be taken from shrubs and trees suitable for propagation, including roses (Houdret 70-75).

**Harvest:** Bulbs, late summer to early autumn. Roots in autumn or winter. Harvest aerial or above ground parts between 6 and 10 am, just before they wilt in the sun. If harvesting leaf, many are best just before flowering. Harvest most flowers just as they are beginning to bloom, you should be able to see the color of the bud. The traditional moon phase for harvesting aerial parts is near or during the full moon. Harvest seed and fruit when mature, with some exceptions. Harvest barks in the spring or fall. Never strip, take the whole tree. Always leave the healthiest looking trees. If you take from the small branches only, be aware of potentially leaving the tree vulnerable to fungal rot. For many barks, the inner bark, or cambium, is the most active. Leave short trunks for pollarding, and low stumps for coppicing. This will provide an ongoing harvest. The traditional phase for barks is the three-quarter waning moon. Harvest roots after seeding, if possible, in the early morning before the sun hits. Harvest biennials in the autumn of the first year or the spring of the second year. The traditional phase is the new moon (Buhner 191). Time for preserving.

**Clearing:** Cut back dead top growth of hardy herbaceous perennials, they don't need winter protection, such as mint and lemon balm. It left until spring, new growth is likely to come through before the old stems have been cut back. Dig up and compost annuals, including borage, and biennials in their second year.

Remove leaf material for compost to prevent fungal disease.

**Pruning:** In early autumn, well before frost, trim deciduous shrubs when they lose their leaves in late autumn to early winter.

**Soil preparation:** For new plantings, dig heavy soils and spread with manure to be broken down by winter frost.

**Containers:** Bring in tender and half-hardy container grown plants before frost. Cut back excess top growth and give them a minimal amount of water.

**Protection:** Protect the plant not so frost hardy, add straw. Or pot them in the greenhouse for the winter (Houdret 70-75).

## Winter:

November:



Lots of wind blowing, mulch beds with leaves to protect roots from frost and give cover to beneficial, predator beetles.

### **December:**

Clean-up. Banish any signs of disease to the trash bin. Don't dead head perennials too early, the plant may not go dormant properly. Brown is a color too.

Provide water for birds and insects. Bug bowls are shallow containers filled with rocks and water.

Build appropriate bird houses and leave a brush pile where birds can hide, a rotten log or stump. Birds like layers of vegetation

**January:** imagining and planning. Plan for bests of last year.

Order seed catalogs and clean equipment.

Store seeds in a tight-fitting lid in a cool area.

**Start seeds** (Seattle Tilth).

**Propagating:** With a greenhouse, force some herbs for an early crop. Mint and chives. Dig up the roots in late autumn to early winter, divide and replant in large pots with a growing medium. Plant trees, bare rooted roses and hedges during their dormant period, and plant garlic bulbs (Houdret 70-75).

**Harvesting:** Roots in autumn or winter. Bark should not be striped from very young trees (Houdret 70-75). Harvest saps and pitches in the late winter or early spring (Buhner 191).

**Cleaning:** Wash and clean pots, seed trays and equipment for propagation. Clean the greenhouse, wash the glass, and do not leave old bags of potting compost to pests and diseases. Oil tools.

**Construction:** New paths, terraces or hard surface areas may be constructed, garden schemes laid out and beds prepared for planting.

**Containers:** Protect them with fleece. Roots of even relatively hardy plants are more vulnerable. If the soil freezes it will expand and crack the pot. Give these plants the minimum of water, without drying them out completely. Don't feed.

**Plant protection:** Check the outdoor-grown perennials are protected; they dislike cold winds and water logged roots (Houdret 70-75). Give plants adequate protection with mulches, cloches and cold frames in the winter. Temperatures are often in the teens and below (Seattle Tilth).<sup>2</sup>