

Pot herbs are grown as a 'cut' as you need 'fresher' alternative to cut herbs; suited to growing in well lit, protected conditions on the windowsill or work-top. Occasionally we find that people are too kind to their pot herbs and are unsuccessful due to over watering. Think of the hot dry Mediterranean conditions that many herbs are associated with. Take the pot herb out of its sleeve and place on a saucer. In general, treat it as if it were a houseplant and



## HOW TO LOOK AFTER POT HERBS

water sparingly but often when the compost is dry to the touch. During the cool winter months, you'll probably find it needs very little watering.

Over time as the herb grows, feed occasionally with an appropriate plant food such as Babybio. If the herb becomes overly pot bound, transfer it into a slightly larger size pot with fresh compost.

The exceptions are:

### Basil

Let the plant tell you when it needs watering, as it will start to wilt. Stressing the plants will increase the production of essential oils, improving the flavour. Watering the plant will dilute its flavour, so if you can, water at least a day before you use it.

To stop the plants getting too leggy, pinch back the stems to just above new side shoots.

## HOW TO LOOK AFTER CUT HERBS

Simply place the cut herbs in their bag in the salad drawer of the refrigerator. Alternatively, for most stalky herbs like thyme and parsley, treat like a cut flower. Cut 2cm off the bottom of the stalks and place in a cup of water in the refrigerator. Basil is the exception! Do not refrigerate, as the chill will quickly turn the leaves black. Simply store in its bag in a cool dark place, or cut 2cm off the stems and place in a cup of water positioned out of direct sunlight.



### Coriander

Coriander is the most difficult pot herb to look after! Water it but often, if required, when the surface of the compost is dry to the touch. As Coriander is a natural rosette forming plant, it tends to collapse when taken out of its sleeve.

### Mint

Mint grows best in moist conditions. Keep the compost just moist to the touch.

## FRESH HERBS

### USING FRESH HERBS

Rinse herbs with cold water, and gently pat dry with kitchen paper.

**Carrot family** – Coriander, Curly Parsley, Flat leaf Parsley, Dill.

For pot herbs, the new leaves are produced at the base, so harvest just above this point to allow the new growth to grow on. Use both the leaves and stalks.

**Mint family** – Basil, Greek Basil, Mint, Oregano, Rosemary, Sage, Thyme, Lemon Thyme

For pot herbs, pinch off sprigs above a side shoot. Use the sprigs whole or strip the leaves off the stem and chop.

With Basil, pinch leaves off the stem and tear, rather than chopping with a metal knife, as this will stop the cut edge turning black. With small leaved Greek basil, pick off small sprigs rather than individual leaves.



Others;

**Onion family** - Chive  
Use scissors to snip off leaves and prepare, rather than cutting with a knife.

**Daisy family** – Tarragon  
Use the sprigs whole or strip the leaves off the stem and chop.

**Grass family** - Lemon grass  
To use stalks whole, bash with the side of a knife to release the flavour. Alternatively, remove a few of the tough outer leaf sheaths and finely slice.

### CARING FOR HERBS

There are many different ways to look after fresh herbs, depending on variety and whether they are pre-cut or living. You will find care notes on the back of packaging but here are some useful hints to make sure you get the most out of them



### PRESERVING HERBS

**Freezing herbs** - any left over herbs can be frozen. Wash and gently shake dry. Place in a labelled bag and place in the drawer in the freezer. Best used within a month. To use, crush the bag and sprinkle into curries and stews. This will add flavour but will not be as good as using fresh herbs! Lemon grass stalks can be stored in the freezer for up to a month, and chopped whilst still frozen. Chopped mint can be frozen in ice cubes for cold summer drinks.



**Drying herbs** - robust herbs such as oregano, thyme, sage, mint & rosemary respond well to drying, but they will lose some of their depth of flavour.