

## Flavorful Herbs Are Easy to Grow

*Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service — Galveston County Office*



PHOTO CREDIT: Briana Etie

The Galveston County Master Gardeners are growing many types of herbs in their greenhouse for their Fall Plant Sale on October 20. Pictured above is fennel. Master Gardeners will provide a seminar on "Herbs for the Gulf Coast" on Saturday, October 6, from 9:00 - 11:00 a.m.

Herbs are vital to flavor many dishes. More and more local gardeners are learning that herbs are easy to grow and can add flowers, fragrance and texture to the landscape.

Local gardeners can successfully grow a wide variety of herbs, although some, such as French tarragon and lavender, often

succumb to our hot, wet summers despite careful culture. When selecting which herbs you want to grow in your garden, consider what you commonly cook with. Look at the herbs in your kitchen cabinet and start off growing those types of herbs that are recommended for growing in

the Texas Gulf Coast region; there will likely be a diverse range of herbs that fit this bill.

The Galveston County Masters have been growing a wide variety of herbs in their greenhouse for sale at their upcoming Fall Plant Sale on Saturday, October 20, at the Galveston County



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Fairgrounds located in Santa Fe. To download the list of herbs and other plants that will be available visit their website (<https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/>).

Most herbs require at least four to six hours of direct sun a day and excellent drainage. Raised beds are best for most herbs; many herbs can easily be grown in containers. If raised garden beds are not practical for you and your drainage is poor, try growing herbs in containers.

Locate your culinary herb-growing area as close to the kitchen as possible so they are convenient to use while you are cooking. If you have to walk all the way across the yard to harvest them, they'll likely be underutilized.

For growing purposes in the Texas Gulf Coast growing region, herbs can be loosely grouped into cool-season annuals and warm-season annuals that live for one season and then die and perennials, which live for several years.

Cool-season herbs can tolerate normal winter freezes. Excellent herbs to plant now include cilantro, dill, fennel, mints, onion chives, parsley, oregano, rosemary and thyme.

Some perennial herbs that do well here are mints, lemon verbena, lemon balm, rosemary, Mexican tarragon, burnet, sorrel, society garlic, garlic chives, oregano, pineapple sage and rue. All the peren-

nial herbs can be planted now and through spring using transplants.

Thyme, sage, and many of the scented geraniums are perennial herbs that require excellent drainage to survive the summer. They may be more successful when grown in containers and placed in a location that gets some afternoon shade during summer. Even grown under good conditions, they tend to be short-lived and often succumb to root and stem rots in the hot, wet late-summer season.

Harvest herbs frequently and regularly, being careful not to deplete all the plant's foliage. Take no more than one third of the total foliage at any one time. The flowers of herbs may also be used as a garnish or to flavor dishes.

Sometimes the herb garden can be too productive. At these times, it is important to know how to preserve the extras. Most herbs – but not basil – can be kept for about a week after harvesting in plastic bags in the vegetable storage section of your refrigerator or with their stems placed in small glasses of water. Ways to preserve them for longer periods are drying and freezing.

### Herb Growing Program on October 6

Are your taste buds demanding more flavor than commercially prepared dried herbs provide? Are you interested in growing your own herbs or in storing fresh

herbs for future use in pestos, vinegars or oils?

Then, take advantage of the opportunity to learn about the basics of growing herbs in your own garden and their long-term storage and many uses in home recipes. Galveston County Master Gardeners will present a seminar on "Herbs for the Gulf Coast" on Saturday, October 6, from 9:00 - 11:00 a.m.

Galveston County Master Gardeners Nancy Noh and Briana Etie will discuss herbs that grow well in the Gulf Coast garden, growing tips, lore, propagation, and uses. The audience will be encouraged to share their experiences and participate in the discussion.

The program is open to the general public and will be conducted at the Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office located in Carbine Park (4102-B Main St. in La Marque). Pre-register by e-mail ([galvcountymgs@gmail.com](mailto:galvcountymgs@gmail.com)) or phone (281-309-5065).

