

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service — Galveston County Office



PHOTO CREDIT: William M. Johnson

The Galveston County Master Gardeners are growing many types of herbs (pictured above is rosemary) in their greenhouse for their upcoming Spring Plant Sale on February 16. Master Gardeners will also provide a seminar on Herbs for the Gulf Coast on Saturday, February 9, from 9:00 – 11:30 a.m.

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

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



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Dr. William Johnson is a horticulturist with the Galveston County Office of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. Visit his website at <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston>.

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for sale at their upcoming Spring Plant Sale on Saturday, February 16, at the Galveston County Fairgrounds located in Hitchcock. To download the list of herbs and other plants that will be available visit their website (<https://aggiehorticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/>).

Most herbs require at least four to six hours of direct sun a day and good soil drainage. Raised beds are best for most herbs. If raised garden beds are not practical for you and your soil 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. Perennial herbs can be planted now and through spring using transplants.

Thyme, sage, and many of the scented geraniums are perennial herbs that require good soil 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 to not remove excessive amounts of the plants' foliage. As a general rule, do not remove more than one-third of the total foliage when harvesting leaves. The flowers of herbs may also be used as a garnish 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.

Growing and Using Herbs Program on February 9

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 pesto, 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. Fort Bend County Master Gardener Tricia Bradbury will present a seminar on Saturday, February 9, from 9:00 - 11:30 a.m. on "Growing and Using Herbs."

The program is open to the general public and will be conducted at the Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office located in Carbide Park (4102-B Main St. in La Marque). Preregister by e-mail (galvcountrymgs@gmail.com) or phone (281-309-5065).

How to Plant Your Fruit Tree Program on February 9

Galveston County Master Gardener Herman Auer will provide a presentation on Saturday, February 9, from 1:00 - 2:30 p.m. on How to Plant Your Fruit Tree. Whether you purchase a fruit tree from the upcoming Master Gardener Spring Plant Sale or elsewhere, knowing how to properly plant your tree is just as important as knowing what fruit tree would do best in your home landscape. Herman will share his knowledge gained from his 45 years of experience with growing fruit trees.

The program is open to the general public and will be conducted at the Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office located in Carbide Park (4102-B Main St. in La Marque). Preregister by e-mail (galvcountrymgs@gmail.com) or phone (281-309-5065).

