



Herbs for Medicinal Purposes

Some of the best herbs to grow (or forage) for medicinal purposes are:

Grouped in order of USDA hardiness zones. Name, hardiness zone; growing conditions; type and propagation; invasive(?); books where tincturing or other use description to be found (see footnotes).

Calendula (*Calendula officinalis*); Zones 2a-11b; full or partial sun; light, poor, well-drained soil; annual; seed; non-invasive; Cech, Buhner H AB

Purslane (*Portulaca oleracea*); Zones 2a-11b; full sun; any well-drained soil, drought-tolerant; annual; seed, stem cutting; can be invasive; Cech

Burdock (*Arctium lappa*); Zones 2a-11b; full to (preferably) partial sun; moist soil, tolerates wide range of soils, especially nitrogen-rich soil; biennial; seed (pre-soak or scarify); can be invasive; Cech, Buhner H AB

Alfalfa (*Medicago sativa*); Zones 2a-9b; full sun, well-drained soil, wide range of growing conditions, drought-tolerant; perennial; seed; non-invasive; Buhner H AB

Rugosa rose, dog rose, wild rose (*Rosa rugosa*); Zones 2a-7b; full sun; humus-rich, acidic-neutral, moist, well-drained soil; perennial shrub; stem cuttings; can be invasive;

Broadleaf Plantain (*Plantago major*); Zones 3a-12b; full to partial sun; any soil; perennial; seed; invasive; Cech, Buhner H AB

Mullein (*Verbascum olympicum, Verbascum thapsus*); Zones 3a-9b; full sun; alkaline, poor, well-drained soil, drought-tolerant; short-lived perennial/biennial; seed or division; non-invasive; Cech, Buhner H AB

Comfrey (*Symphytum officinale*); Zones (3a-9b) 4a-8b; full to partial sun; moderately fertile, moist soil; perennial; division of fleshy roots in Spring, root cuttings in early winter, seed; can be invasive; Cech, Buhner H AB

Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*); Zones 3a-9b; wide range of conditions, best full sun and moist soil; perennial; seed; invasive; Cech, Buhner H AB

Saint John's Wort (*Hypericum perforatum*); Zones 3a-8b; full to partial sun; moist but well-drained soil; perennial; seed, division or softwood cuttings; can be invasive; Cech, Buhner H AB

Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea angustifolia*); Zones 3a-8b; full to partial sun; well-drained soil, drought-tolerant; perennial; division, root cuttings; non-invasive; Cech, Buhner H AB

Herbs for Medicinal Purposes *(continued)*

Lemon Balm (*Melissa officinalis*); Zones 3a-7b; full to partial sun, in any moist, well-drained soil, protect from excessive winter wet; perennial; seed, division; can be invasive; Cech, Buhner H AB

Nettle (*Urtica dioica*); Zones 4a-10b; full to partial sun; rich, moist soil; perennial; division, seed; invasive; Cech

(Purple-flowered) Oregano (*Origanum vulgare*); Zones 4a-10b; full to partial sun; well-drained (preferably alkaline) soil; perennial; seed, division; non-invasive; Cech

Sweet Violet (*Viola odorata*); Zones 4a-9b; full to partial sun; moist but well-drained soil; perennial; seed, division; non-invasive; Cech, Buhner H AB

Garlic (*Allium sativum*); Zones 4a-9b; full sun; sheltered spot, fertile, well-drained soil; perennial grown as an annual; division (cloves); non-invasive; Cech, Buhner H AB

Onion (*Allium cepa*); Zones 5a-10b; NOTE: it is more important to pay attention to daylength and latitude than hardiness; Short-day Latitudes 25° to 35°, Intermediate-day Latitudes 32° to 42°, Longday Latitudes 37° to 47°; full sun; sheltered spot, moist but well-drained soil; perennial grown as annual; seed or sets; non-invasive

Thyme (*Thymus vulgaris*); Zones 5a-9b; hot full sun; alkaline-neutral, well-drained soil, droughttolerant; perennial; seed, division, basal stem cuttings in Spring; non-invasive; Cech, Buhner H AB

Elder, Elderberry (*Sambucus nigra*); Zones 5a-7b; full to partial sun; moderately fertile, humus-rich, but also extreme chalky, moist but well-drained soil; perennial shrub or tree; seeds, suckers, softwood or hardwood cuttings; can be invasive; Cech, Buhner H AB

Oats (*Avena sativa*), Wild oats (*Avena fatua*); Zones 6a-10b; full sun; moist well-drained soil, tolerates some wet and cold; annual; seed; non-invasive; Cech, Buhner H AB (wild oats)

Cayenne pepper, or Bird pepper, or Tabasco pepper (*Capsicum frutescens*); must be over 90,000 heat units; Zones 9a-11b; full to partial sun; humus-rich or light, sandy, well-drained soil, tolerates much dryness; perennial (but usually only 2 years) if overwintered inside otherwise annual; seed; non-invasive; Cech, Buhner H AB

Tulsi, Indian Basil or Sacred Basil (*Ocimum sanctum*, now *Ocimum tenuiflorum*); Zones 10b-11; full sun; moist, sandy-loam, well-drained soil; perennial: can be grown in container or overwintered inside; seed, cuttings; non-invasive; Cech

Footnotes (books):

- Cech = Rico Cech, "Making Plant Medicine" >
- Buhner H AB = Stephen Buhner, "Herbal Antibiotics" >

