



Harvesting and Preserving Herbs
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General Guidelines:

It is best to harvest herbs before a plant flowers; take cuttings in the early morning to maintain highest amount of essential oils.

Pinch back flowers regularly, even if you are not harvesting. This helps the plant bush out more, produces more leaves

Never cut off more than 50% of a plant at one time.

It is easier to gather and dry (or otherwise preserve) small amounts of cuttings throughout the season. So, keep a couple of rattan paper plate holders handy to air dry your small batches of cutting on top of the refrigerator.

Herbs that taste best frozen, not dried: chives, parsley, basil and tarragon. Freezing is a better way to preserve the flavor. Any of these can be dried, but will have best flavor if frozen instead.

Freezing – Finely chop the leaves and fill an ice cube tray with them. Top with water and freeze. 1 ice cube of frozen herbs are equal to 1 teaspoon of dried.

Methods of Preserving: Drying, Freezing, Flavoring Oils, Vinegars, Butters and Jellies

Drying - Bundle and hang upside down, in a dark, warm, airy place.

Oils - 2 large (or 3 - 4 small) springs of an herb in up to 3 cups of oil. Daily, gently shake daily for minimum of 2 weeks. Keep refrigerated.

Vinegar - 1 cup of herbs per 4 cups of vinegar. Daily, gently shake, test after 2 weeks.

Butters: add finely chopped herbs softened butter and freeze until needed.

Basic Herbal Vinegars

Supplies Needed:

- 4 cups of a vinegar of your choice
- 1 cup of herb(s), rinsed and patted dry
- 1 clean jar for steeping

- Non-metal funnel
- Sealable, sterilized bottle for storing, with a non-reactive lid

Paper coffee filters to filter vinegar

Bruise the leaves of the herb(s) and put into a clean glass jar. Pour the vinegar over the herbs and cover (with non-metal lid). Shake the jar once a day for at least a week. Sample the vinegar after 7-10 days. If you like the flavor at that point, pour the vinegar through a paper coffee filter into a sterilized bottle in which you will store the final product. Discard the bruised leaves and put a couple of fresh sprigs into the jar. Cover the jar with the lid and seal with paraffin if you choose. Label and date your product.

To insure clear, unclouded vinegar be sure that the rinsed herbs have no water droplets on them prior to adding to the vinegar.