

## **HERBS AS HOUSEPLANTS**

Grow herbs inside during the winter to have fresh herbs at your fingertips for winter salads, stir fries and sauces. Make your home fragrant with Christmas herbs: rosemary, scented geraniums, the mints, lavender and lemon verbena. Follow these easy care instructions for success!

### **LIGHT:**

Most herbs thrive on light-5 hours of direct sunlight a day. A southern exposure is ideal.

**EXCEPTIONS:** Mints, bay, parsley, rosemary and thyme which take partial shade and lemon balm which likes full shade.

No natural sunlight? Use two tube cool white fixtures hung 6"-8" above the herbs, left on for 14-16 hours a day. Your plants will be bushy and productive.

### **TEMPERATURE:**

Most herbs prefer temperatures on the cool side, with days 65 degrees and nights 55 to 60 degrees. They will do fine with days of 70 degrees and nights in the 60's. Many herbs will survive temperatures in the mid-to-low 40's, though scented geraniums and basil can't survive below 50 degrees.

Remember: herb foliage pressed against frozen windows will freeze and die. Slip a piece of paper between the foliage and the window or a cute decorative plate or interesting basket.

### **AIR CIRCULATION:**

Herbs don't like stagnant air, so keep air moving by cracking a window in an adjoining room. A blast of cold air is a curse.

### **SOIL:**

Good drainage is important! Some successful mixes are:

- A. 1 part sand, 1 part peat moss.
- B. 1 part potting soil, 1 part peat moss.
- C. 1 part compost, 1 part sand, 1 part perlite.
- D. OR...pick up a bag of lightweight potting mix.

Plant in 4"-6" pots. For plants with spreading underground runners, like the mints, wide, shallow pots are ideal. For parsley a deep pot is better.

### **FERTILIZATION:**

Fertilize once a month at half the recommended strength. This schedule is enough to keep them productive, but not so much that they get leggy and lose their flavor.