

## CREATING A COMBO PLANTER WITH HERBS

According to “Herb Whisperer” Charlotte Gardner

Working with herbs in a combo planter is similar in some respects to working with annual flowers, (i.e. the traditional “thriller, filler, spiller” concept). However, herbs are a lot less “forgiving” when it comes to meeting their needs! Herbs do not like to be crowded together in a container as they require good air circulation to stay healthy. Herbs are also more particular about their light as well as their watering requirements, thus it is important to combine only plants that are the same type. Herbs that have “woody” stems and leaves or needles (such as rosemary, sage, lavender, thyme, etc.) need extremely good drainage and are best grown in clay pots that dry out quickly to prevent root rot. Herbs that have more “fleshy” stems and leaves (such as basil, chives, parsley, fennel, tarragon, etc.) like to be kept relatively moist and grow well in plastic or ceramic pots. For optimal flavor as well as fragrance, it is best to keep fertilizing (with an organic fertilizer) to a minimum. Rapid and excessive growth results in lower levels and concentration of the herb’s essential oils.

Herbs that tend to be more aggressive (such as mints, lemon balm, oregano, etc.) are best grown as single specimens rather than in combos unless they are planted around the edges of a planter and left to trail. However constant trimming and thinning of such plants is necessary to keep them from overcrowding the other plants in the container. Growing herbs in containers allows even folks that have very little gardening space available to add a multitude of flavors, fragrance, as well as health benefits to their lives!