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Spring Gleaning

Herbs can be lovely—but if you're looking to buy the organic, locally sourced kind, prepare to leaf out a lot of green. We propose a fun, economical alternative: Grow your own, either indoors or out. These are some of the best types to harvest at home.



Mint

Many experts recommend growing mint but warn against letting it run amok—best to keep it in pots. **Elise Bauer**, who runs *Simply Recipes* (simplyrecipes.com), says she prefers spearmint because it's so easy to grow and maintain. "Once it's established," Bauer says of the hardy herb, "you never have to plant it again. It keeps coming back every year." Mint is happy in shade, so she plants it along the side of her house, which also prevents bugs from coming in—they hate the stuff. And its culinary uses abound: Slice mint leaves into a chiffonade, mix sprigs with spring peas, or steep them in tea or lemonade. Also: Juleps! Mojitos!



Rosemary

Isaac Eliaz, an integrative doctor and herbalist at Northern California's Amitabha Clinic (amitabhaclinic.com), appreciates rosemary for its rich folkloric history. "Its elegant, needle-like leaves impart a delightful piney flavor to complement meats and savory, garlicky dishes," he says. Eliaz adds that you can steep it in hot water for 10 minutes to make a soothing tea. Rosemary is an easy but slow grower and thrives year-round. Mature plants like full sun and well-drained soil.



Cilantro

Cilantro is a love-it-or-hate-it herb, but **Christy Wilhelmi**, the founder of the gardening website *Gardenerd* (gardenerd.com), decidedly loves it, in anything from Indian dishes like chana masala to Asian stir-fries to south-of-the-border creations—especially guacamole and green chili. "Its fresh flavor is more potent when you grow it yourself, and you can grind the seeds for coriander," she says. Cilantro grows best in cool weather and, in most places, can be planted from February through May for a summer harvest. In hotter areas, though, cilantro grows best in fall. Collect as needed, Wilhelmi advises, cutting the outside stems and keeping the soil moist but not soggy. If left to flower, cilantro should reseed itself each year.



Sage

"Garden sage, *Salvia officinalis*, is an herb everyone should have," says **Tania Gybels**, a landscape designer and horticulturist in Los Angeles. "It goes with all poultry dishes, and the leaves can be simply flour-fried in organic olive oil and served as a light appetizer. Pair it with a California merlot, fresh figs, and locally made chèvre, and it's always very well received." The plant's purple flowers make a nice addition to a fragrance garden, and it's perennial, so in warm zones you can plant it any time of year—though it does need full sunlight and good drainage.

Instead of using synthetic pesticides to keep bugs off plants, try neem oil or a spray made of diluted molasses mixed with a bit of liquid soap.