

## Herbs add to the spice of life

NEWARK, Del. — Athletes in ancient Greece used mint as an after-bath lotion, and early travelers used it to purify drinking water on long ocean voyages. In the Middle Ages, rosemary was popular for its tranquilizing

properties and as a cure-all for headaches.

Early American settlers used herbs to improve the taste of questionable preserved meats and to add flavor to plain diets. They also grew herbs to dye fabrics,

concoct remedies for a variety of illnesses, and add fragrance to linens, baths and homes.

Herbs are classified as annuals, biennials or perennials. Annuals bloom one season and die, although some, like dill, often reseed themselves. Biennials live for two seasons but bloom only the second

year. Perennials overwinter and, once established, bloom each season.

Deciding which herbs to plant may be difficult for beginning gardeners. Take a cue from supermarket spice shelves, dried herb displays in gift shops, and

cookbooks, says University of Delaware extension horticulture specialist Dr. Charles Dunham. He suggests the following:

- Strong herbs—winter savory, rosemary, sage.
- Herbs strong enough for accent — sweet basil, dill, mint, sweet marjoram, tarragon, thyme.
- Herbs for blending — chives, summer savory.

As your interest and needs increase, you can add some of the following:

- Annuals—-anise, chervil, coriander.
- Biennials—caraway, parsley.
- Perennials—fennel, lovage, marjoram, winter savory.

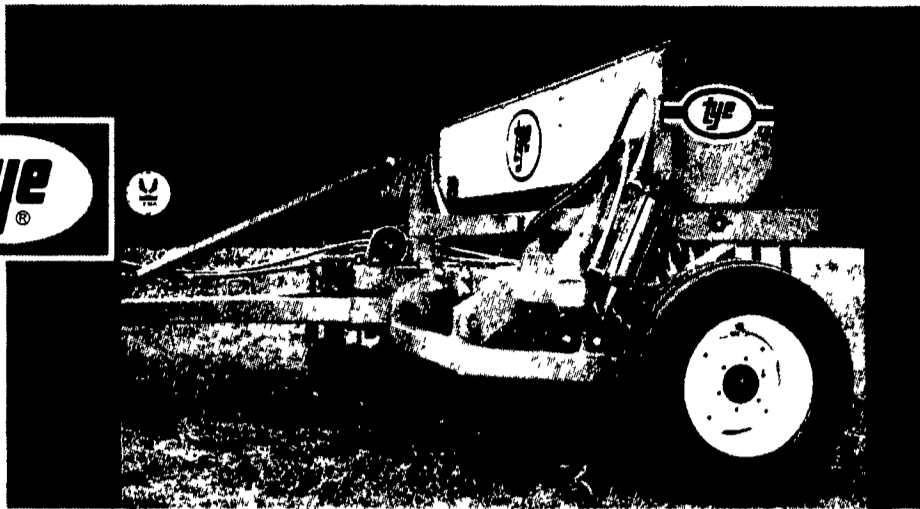
Dunham says to select a sunny area 4 feet wide and up to 20 feet long for a kitchen herb garden. Individual 12- by 18-inch plots should be adequate for separate herbs. Keep annuals and perennials separate.

When you choose the site, consider drainage and soil fertility. Drainage is probably the single most important factor for success, Dunham says. Herbs will not grow in wet soil.

Soil drainage means the rate at which water moves through the soil — not how quickly water runs off the surface or out of the area. If necessary, use raised beds. To improve soil drainage and help retain needed moisture, add several bushels of organic matter, such as compost, to each 100 square feet of bed area.

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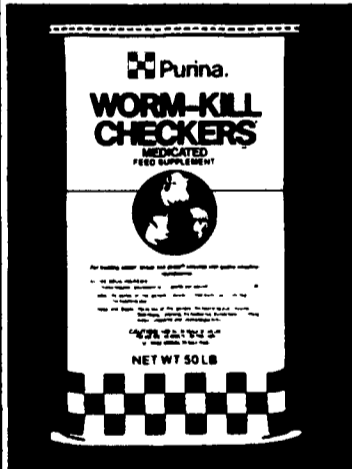
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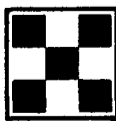
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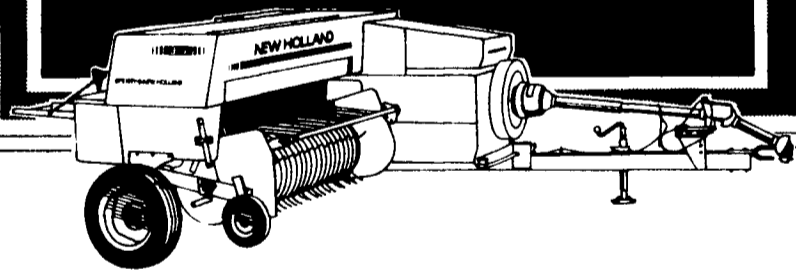
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## USDA post to Russell

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block has named Randy M. Russell as deputy assistant secretary for economics, replacing J. Dawson Ahalt who has been promoted to senior advisor to Assistant Secretary William G. Leshner.

Russell, a vice president for agriculture and trade policy at the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, will assume his new position Monday.

He previously served the U.S. Department of Agriculture as an economist with the Economic Research Service. He also served as a special assistant to the secretary to coordinate development of the 1981 farm bill.

He has held the positions of agricultural legislative assistant to Sen. Rudy Boschwitz (R-Minn.) and director of government relations for the Pillsbury Company, Minneapolis.

Ahalt has held several key posts during his more than two decades of government service, including chairman of USDA's World Agricultural Outlook Board, deputy and staff economist to the director of agricultural economics and deputy associate director for economic policy at the Cost of Living Council.